

**FACTORS IN THE PERSISTENCE OR DECLINE  
OF ETHNIC GROUP MOBILISATION:  
A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW AND CASE STUDY  
OF CULTURAL GROUP RESPONSES AMONG  
AFRIKANERS IN POST-APARTHEID  
SOUTH AFRICA**

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## ABSTRACT

**FACTORS IN THE PERSISTENCE OR DECLINE OF ETHNIC MOBILISATION: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW AND CASE STUDY OF CULTURAL GROUP RESPONSES AMONG AFRIKANERS IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA**

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The candidate has two major linked interests. One is to reconcile competing explanations of ethnicity, and the other is to explore the factors underlying ethnicity in the light of a case study of the rise and decline of ethnic mobilisation among white Afrikaners in South Africa. For many observers the recent apparent "*decomposition*" of Afrikaner nationalist mobilisation has been surprising, and the factors associated with this trend were expected to contain insights relevant to the theoretical debate.

The first part of the thesis is a review of key aspects of literature which offers alternative explanations of ethnic attachments and mobilisation. It commences with a theme-setting example of a reconciliation of alternative viewpoints. At the end of the literature review a series of propositions is offered, suggesting the utility of an integration of alternative perspectives.

The case study of Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation commences with a historical overview of the emergence of Afrikaner ethnic nationalism, from the early colonial settlement up to the

present. Thereafter a wide range of empirical, survey-based evidence is presented, including exploratory factor analyses, covering patterns in the cultural, racial, socio-economic and political attitudes of Afrikaners, comparing their responses with those of other South Africans. An account of recent political change and the responses of Afrikaners to the events is given.

In the final chapter conclusions drawn from the evidence are presented as further propositions in a broader theoretical context. The fragmentation of Afrikaner ethnic nationalism is found to be associated with the bureaucratization of ethnicity during the period of apartheid rule, ambivalence on group boundaries, the usurpation of cultural identity by race, and a breakdown of internal co-ordination processes which ethnic mobilisation appears to require.

At the same time a core of ethnic commitment, substantially independent of its material and political utility, is found to persist, surrounded by a wider compound of racial, cultural and political consciousness. Alternative scenarios of probable future developments are tentatively offered.

The analysis appears to support the initial argument that ethnic mobilisation involves full combinations of the processes which competing theories usually pit against one another. The process of ethnic mobilisation involves a variable incorporation of elements of class, group status and honour and political activation, in which identity commitment, co-ordinating agencies and ethnic boundary-construction interact as defining and integrating elements.



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*"I was told that the privileged and the people formed two nations."*

*Benjamin Disraeli, Sybil, 1845*

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION:

#### THE ORIENTATION, SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THIS ANALYSIS

##### 1.1 THE ORIENTATION, WITH GELLNER AS ILLUSTRATION

This dissertation has been approached as a case study on ethnicity within a particular society, and with a special emphasis on a particular group, the white Afrikaners, but with the purpose of drawing conclusions that may be of wider and more general theoretical relevance to the topic. Very simply and briefly, the case study will be broadly focused on the following general question:

*"what are the features and factors, both within the ethnic phenomenon itself, or operating on it from forces or factors external to it, which sustain or weaken ethnic group coherence, mobilisation and group-based action?"*

Of the two foci of interest, the second is arguably the most interesting, because there are fewer studies of group decomposition than there are studies of ethnic persistence and group mobilisation.

There are any number of societies in which such a case study could quite profitably have been undertaken, but since this author knows the South African situation best, the choice of society was obvious. Furthermore, the Afrikaners in South Africa may constitute a very interesting example of a formerly cohesive and powerfully mobilised ethnic group which, contrary to most expectations, has undergone political fragmentation and a loss of group coherence under the impact of sweeping political changes in the wider society. It therefore offers itself for study as a signal case of ethnic group "*demobilisation*".

But South Africa was not necessarily the easiest choice. This is a society in which the topic of ethnicity has become very politicised, and very understandably so, because the policy of apartheid was driven by interests which were structured and regulated in ethnic and racial terms.

In the era of apartheid, the way in which ethnicity was approached by writers and commentators was often seen as somehow associated with a particular political position in relation to apartheid and in relation to the struggle against apartheid. Crudely stated, authors who took ethnicity or ethnic commitments very seriously were often seen as signalling a tolerance of the apartheid order. Alternatively they were sometimes seen as being intent upon, or at least at risk of giving apartheid a semblance of legitimacy by associating it with universal phenomena. The apartheid government quite substantially stimulated this discomfort with ethnic studies by secretly sponsoring an entire international journal devoted to the study of ethnicity, entitled *Plural Societies*, as well as sundry other, carefully disguised ideological products, all of which emerged in disclosures which are referred to as the "*Information Scandal of 1978*".<sup>1</sup>

Donald Horowitz's comment about the climate in the study of ethnicity in general has been magnified in the South African situation:

*"The study of ethnic conflict has often been a grudging concession to something distasteful, largely because, especially in the West, ethnic affiliations have been in disrepute, for deep ideological reasons ... and the first response to the rising tide of ethnic conflict was to treat it as an epiphenomenon."* (Horowitz, 1985:13)

Even today, strands of tension exist among many academics and intellectuals around the topic of ethnicity, although positions have softened very considerably.

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<sup>1</sup> This scandal involved the unauthorised use of state fund by the Department of Information, on a variety of forms of propaganda. A newspaper, a five-volume series on human rights and freedoms and other products, as well as the journal referred to. Many academics contributed unwittingly. The cabinet minister involved eventually resigned. (See South African Institute of Race Relations, *Survey of Race Relations*, 1978.)

In view of the discomfort which existed and which still exists to some degree, many people reading this dissertation within the context of political and academic discourse in South Africa, are bound to ask the early question of where the analysis "*stands*" in relation to the distinctions set out very briefly above. At one level any such question can be answered very briefly. This author fully accepts that ethnic cleavages and concepts relating to ethnicity and culture were used deliberately as part of the rationalisations disguising and supporting material and power interests within the previous political structure of engineered racial inequality in South Africa. But a fuller response can also be given.

The dissertation has no single specific mission -- it is not written to convince the reader that some schools of thought are right or wrong, or that some compelling basic truth remains to be uncovered. One of its major conclusions can be anticipated, which is that aside from a few highly ideologically inspired or politically instrumental viewpoints, most serious students of ethnicity have all been at least partially right, even when they were vehemently disagreeing with one another. If it has a mission it is to reconcile viewpoints which have created academic and intellectual antagonisms. In this spirit it will attempt to endorse the view of a rather quiet and often overlooked British sociologist of great wisdom and intellectual judgement, W.G. Runciman, expressed in a chapter on the emergence of modern sociology called "*A catalogue of errors*" (Runciman, 1998: chapter 3).

Runciman observes much evidence in sociology of

*"The self-defeating consequence of trying to banish rather than incorporate alternative approaches ..."* (page 54)

He sees in this at least part of the answer to his question:

*"If sociology is, as old as Herodotus and Aristotle -- to say nothing of Herodotus's contemporary ... Confucius -- you may well wonder why it has taken so long to get as far as it has."* (page 46)

In this spirit of reconciliation this author accepts *as points of departure*, that ethnic commitment or mobilisation is not an inevitable consequence of differences in culture or origin, that frequently the cultural or other differences to which ethnic commitments relate are trivial in relation to the scope which ethnic mobilisation can assume, and that, more

often than not, it is substantially the outcome of processes which serve to advance the interests of some group or another and particularly their elites.

At the same time, however, it seems to this author to be equally true that ethnicity has considerably more substance than being simply a form which the rationalisation or manipulation of interests takes. Aside from arguments which will be adduced in the dissertation, this substance is suggested by the ubiquity of its manifestation, and the similarities of ethnic expression at different times and in different places. This added significance is not necessarily derived from any "*natural*" force with all the imperatives which are assumed to flow from it. What this added feature might be has to be carefully and critically but dispassionately uncovered, because it is vitally important in understanding the mobilising power and propensity for social and political commitment with which ethnicity is very often, but not inevitably, associated. As the guiding question in the beginning of this introduction would suggest, the exploration of the nature of the substance will benefit particularly from understanding instances where ethnicity dissipates under the impact of surrounding social forces -- in a sense a form of "*null hypothesis*".

In order to illustrate the orientation of this analysis, it is useful at this early stage to refer to an author whose approach does not close-out alternative possibilities. Reconciliatory positions are not absent in the literature and other authors could have been drawn in to play this anchor role; Donald Horowitz in particular (1985). The analysis by Horowitz, however, is very detailed and full for the purpose. The particular author in question offers a much briefer review, but one which is a good illustration of the integration of factors which can deepen an analysis, and as such is useful as an entry point in this dissertation. The author referred to is Ernest Gellner, and particularly his latest review of nationalism (Gellner, 1997, 1998).

Gellner is not discussing ethnicity in its broadest sense, but that most muscular and formal sub-type of ethnicity called nationalism. His view accords with that of this author when he says that, when ethnicity of the type normally associated with "*high cultures*" develops political ambitions or pretensions, nationalism is the result (page 35-36). His consideration

of nationalism covers virtually all the core issues in the study of the broader phenomenon of ethnicity.

Gellner, because he has respect for the complexity of social dynamics, manages in a single slim book to describe and reconcile some very contrasting attributes of nationalism. In considering Gellner's approach it must be said at the outset that he is forthright in his disapproval of nationalism. He acknowledges the work of Elie Kedourie in awakening him from "*dogmatic slumbers*" in which he assumed the "*naturalness*" and inevitability of ethnicity and nationalism (page 10). Thus awakened, Gellner is eloquent in outlining the alternative position of the "*Humanitarian internationalists, who deplore the particularism, exclusiveness, intolerance and brutality of nationalism...*" (page 9), and does not hesitate to describe nationalists as "*ideological bandits*" (page 42), as being "*under the sway of dark gods*" (page 103) or to describe nationalism as being akin to a social pathology requiring "*specific diagnosis and more specific remedies or palliatives*" (page 103). He entitles one whole chapter "*The murderous virulence of nationalism*" (ch. 8), and goes on to say that one must be "*perturbed by the havoc, suffering, cruelty and injustice often brought by nationalism*" (page 102).

Morally aroused in this way, many lesser social scientists have proceeded to craft their observations and interpretations to support their moral outrage, but not so Gellner. His honesty and depth of observation moves him to admit that the roots of nationalism

*"... are neither shallow nor despicable ... They may not be universally operative in all men and in all social climes ... but they are located very deep indeed in the human condition as it is in our age. They go to the very heart of our being and our situation ... these roots are both inescapable and not dishonourable."* (page 12)

In passing he hints at an even more fundamental basis to nationalism and ethnicity when he refers to their capacity to provide "*instinctual satisfaction*" and to address a "*longing for a gratifying, meaningful order*" (page 103).

In an analysis, which is elegant in its simplicity, he does justice to most of the competing claims in the literature as to the basis of ethnicity and nationalism. The core of his

reconciliation of competing claims made on behalf of nationalism is summed up in a useful analogy with "navel gazing":

*"some nations possess genuinely ancient navels, some have navels invented for them by their own nationalist propaganda, and some are altogether navel-less."* (page 96)

He expands this analogy after discussing Czech and Estonian nationalism by observing that

*"Some nations have navels, some achieve navels, some have navels thrust upon them."*

This generosity of conceptualisation and analysis makes room for almost the entire spectrum of theories of ethnicity, and as such it is refreshing and unusual. How much further would sociology have advanced, had Karl Marx made an early acknowledgement that the mode of production does not define the structure and superstructure of modern industrial society in all respects, or if Talcott Parsons had conceded that the functional prerequisites of society do not always or dominantly define the structure of social action, and that society at any given time is a reconciliation of the imperatives of self-sustaining order and the competition or conflict of interests?

So Gellner argues that some ethnic and nationalist movements are rooted in a history stretching back to the bonds of early kinship, and are experienced in those terms (page 5), but he does not see this near-primordality as inevitable. He says of ethnic culture that it is "*both tenacious and volatile*" (page 94) and says the same for nationalism, because it can be manufactured under the influence of calculations of interests -- the instrumental view. After recounting that a certain Himalayan trading community switched from a Tibeto-Buddhist culture to a Hindu-Nepalese language and religion, after deciding that their trading interests would be more favourably served under the latter, he asserts that "*Cultural traits, though often experienced as given, can be under deliberate control*" (page 2).

At the same time he rejects the view of Kedourie (1960/1993), that nationalism is a shallow, utterly contingent and accidental phenomenon, and instead sees it as a necessary consequence or correlate of social conditions as they impact upon the needs of groups, and as such it is very widespread, deep and pervasive. But the deep roots are not necessarily the



destiny of all men (page 11). He therefore conceives of a difference between "*nationalism-prone and nationalism-resistant humanity*", but acknowledges that most of mankind have fallen into the former camp in the period since the end of the eighteenth century (page 11). He describes some states in which ethnicity has not been a dividing or activating factor as experiencing "*blessed oblivion*" or "*amnesia*" with regard to ethnic origins, singling out France as an example (page 45-6) (although signs of the resurgence of Breton and other identities might qualify its choice).

Notwithstanding the prevalence of nationalism-prone humanity, he is convinced that constructed or instrumentally derived nationalisms, driven by extraneous social conditions, are more frequent than those with ancient, authentic or "*primordial*" roots (page 101). Among the social conditions he has in mind, class is the primary contender driving ethnic mobilisation. In the light of the many viewpoints that class is in fact the real factor and that cultural identity can be a disguise or surrogate for it, however. Gellner is once again scrupulously balanced: "*Classes without ethnicity are blind, ethnicity without class is empty*" (page 61). Hence he avoids pitting these two concepts against each other as so many others have done, and instead sees precisely their interaction as the major force behind modern nationalism.

But if nationalism is mainly a construction or instrumental outcome, it must by definition be an option, and Gellner is firm that it is not an inevitable option. Why then, despite this non-inevitability, would the forces of ethnicity be so prevalent and powerful? Gellner touches on a vital factor when he says that

*"... a good way of recovering social cohesion is through ethnic movements. They can be activated and mobilised more quickly than movements based on more complex considerations: the marks and symbols of ethnic membership are more conspicuous in the modern world than any other. This may be sad, but it is a fact."*  
(page 48)

Gellner, therefore, is like a wise psychiatrist considering a patient with, from his viewpoint, some very unpleasant habits. He curbs his moral reservations, allowing his professionalism to induce a balanced understanding of the "*problem*". This understanding is so inclusive that in his final chapter he rejects various tendentious assertions of how ethnicity and

nationalism should be treated. He prefers a deference to the "*real*" rather than the "*rational*" in approaches to the issue (page 106). In an earlier work (Gellner, 1994: 45), after outlining his theory that ethnicity is stimulated by the forms of production and associated interests in modern society, he has this to say:

*"What can this theory offer those grappling with nationalist turbulence in the real world? A sense of the need for sober realism. The appeal of cultural (ethnic) identity is not a delusion, excogitated by muddled romantics, disseminated by irresponsible extremists and used by egotistical privileged classes to befuddle the masses and to hide their true interests from them. Its appeal is rooted in the real conditions of modern life."*

He argues that in pre-industrial societies kinship operated to allocate roles, statuses and rewards, but that in modern bureaucratic society, kinship has lost this function and has been replaced by ethnicity, which has become the principal method of identity conferment within the structures created by the industrial mode of production (Gellner, 1994:46).

Against this background he argues that the emerging world of nation-states may see, or need to see, a shift towards supranational unity co-existing with recognised regional ethnicities. He takes this logic to the point of suggesting that, under certain conditions, non-territorial ethnicity can be accommodated by formal provisions for the exercise of cultural and group rights within over-arching political units (page 107-8).

In Gellner we see, then, a realpolitik of ethnicity and nationalism. We also see a set of concepts which over-arch the often tedious arguments that ethnicity is or should be exclusively this or that. It may not be an exhaustively researched treatise in all respects, and it is at times too brief to be utterly convincing (some of his earlier works are more convincing), but this is refreshingly mature sociology.

Gellner's brief review of nationalism in its modern forms so easily reconciles many, if not most, of the vexed issues in the study of ethnicity that it provides an excellent anchor for this analysis. But at the same time it leaves some gaps which this dissertation will attempt to address.

First, he does not attempt to set out in any detail why some groups "*navel-gaze*", to use his metaphor, and others are less inclined to turn to ethnicity. He argues convincingly that the reasons lie in the interaction between social situations and identity, but does not set out what combinations of factors stimulate the identity-based response.

Second, when groups within populations in modern society are in stressed or threatened situations, they usually have recourse to options other than communal identity as a basis for their responses. Why then are ethnic or communal responses so frequent. His response that "*classes without ethnicity are blind ...*" is suggestive but not sufficiently informative. His point that ethnicity is effective in restoring social cohesion is more informative but begs for a more thorough exposition. His further argument, that ethnicity is most "*conspicuous*" as a basis of identification and mobilisation, is problematic in the light of the intensity and visibility of issues of class, privilege and power in modern political economies. Gellner hints at even more when he claims that ethnicity is most readily and quickly mobilised, but this begs the question of why it is most easily mobilised among the alternative avenues for activism. Hence Gellner, as an analytical reference, is hugely valuable but no doubt he himself would admit that some of his pointers can be usefully explored in greater detail.

Third, from the opposite side of the debate as it were, he does not attempt to set out in detail why in some cases the identity "*amnesia*", that he ascribes to France, can occur. What types of factors can suppress or displace the communal dynamic? He suggests factors specific to France -- "*a thousand years of history of a (on and off) strong state ...*" (page 46), but is a strong state a general disincentive for ethnic mobilisation? One might expect the opposite hypothesis as well, that strong centralist states can goad ethnicity into greater intensity and resistance to the central state. His other argument that nationalism was stimulated by the rise of Romanticism in central European political culture in reaction to the bloodless rationalism of the Enlightenment, raises the question of why in France there was not a similar reaction to the bloodless bureaucracy of post revolutionary France?

Perhaps more than a strong state but an over-arching state, with high moral legitimacy or even ideological and symbolic hegemony, may be required. These questions are vital for an

understanding of the conditions under which ethnic groups may decompose or assimilate into other groups, and they are of singular importance to the South African case study.

These research challenges, prefaced by Gellner, are the issues which will focus this dissertation. The questions stated at the beginning of this chapter and the framework offered by Gellner are very relevant to the responses of white Afrikaners and other cultural minorities in post-apartheid South Africa. Seeking answers to these questions in the South African situation may at the same time, therefore, offer some general answers to major questions in the debate about ethnicity and group mobilisation on a broader canvas.

## **1.2 THE RELATIVE ABSENCE OF GENERAL THEORIES OF ETHNIC MOBILISATION AND DEMOBILISATION**

The questions arising from Gellner's review will be explored in the context of ethnic mobilisation or its absence, or ethnic demobilisation, in societies in which cultural differentiation exists. There is perhaps less literature to guide this task than that which exists at other levels in the study of ethnicity.

The literature on ethnicity is very rich in description and interpretation. There are three very well-elaborated alternative theories on the driving force behind ethnic phenomena, which are normally referred to as the "*primordialist*", the "*instrumentalist*" and the "*constructivist*" paradigms, and many more flexible nuances around and between them. These are fully set out in chapter 2. Empirical or interpretive studies throughout the world by political scientists, historians, anthropologists and sociologists have produced a massive record of forms of expression and contextual circumstances of ethnicity in a variety of cultures and political systems. It is difficult, therefore, to add meaningfully to this storehouse of information and insights.

What strikes one, however, is how relatively little general systematic work has been done in attempting to understand the conditions under which ethnic mobilisation, open ethnic

protest, dissent or conflict are likely to occur, and equally why they frequently do not occur or cease to occur. Many people have taken great trouble to understand and explain ethnic protests or rebellions with specific accounts of the events in the build-up of forces after the event, but there are fewer texts which can provide guidance, for example, on whether or not ethnic dissent will emerge in particular situations in a society and what factors might have to be present, both external and internal to the ethnic process itself, to precipitate a challenge to an over-arching authority in the particular political system.

Donald Horowitz, one of the authors who is an exception to the typification of research given above, in the sense that he has undertaken extensive comparative work and made general propositions relating to ethnic conflict, comments on this apparent lacuna:

*"As the rediscovery of ethnicity has proceeded apace, so has the availability of information about it. What has emerged is a plethora of more or less parochial material on ethnic conflict in scores of countries. What has not yet emerged is a comprehensive set of generalisations that fits the material and into which new material can be fitted ... There is, in the main, too much knowledge and not enough understanding, too much evidence chasing after too few categories."* (Horowitz, 1985: xi).

Horowitz wrote this observation some thirteen years ago, and the paucity of applicable material still exists as far as this author has been able to determine. Robin Williams has pointed to the difficulties posed in this regard by a relative lack of adequate and comparable data-sets, by problems in developing comparative indicators and to the complex interplay between ethnic and socio-economic phenomena (Robin Williams, 1994: 73).

Chapter 3 will deal with various studies and propositions relating to ethnic action, reaction and mobilisation.

While of considerable utility to this analysis, particularly to the extent to which they explain particular ethnic conflicts, these very focused analyses, however, frequently relate to conflicts which have assumed particular forms in certain types of economies. They are also analyses of a type which assume that particular interests underlie or stimulate ethnic action or inter-group antagonisms. Such interests, and even conflicts of interests, may exist

with or without open protest, mobilisation and dissent. and where they coincide with cultural differences, they certainly do not necessarily or automatically result in ethnic mobilisation. The focus of this analysis, therefore, will be on why such factors will sometimes produce ethnic mobilisation or conflict, and why in other cases they will fail to do so, on the basis of insights drawn from the South African case.

### 1.3 AN INITIAL DEFINITION OF ETHNICITY, AND FURTHER TERMINOLOGICAL AND SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE PHENOMENON

The *Collins Dictionary of Sociology* provides a starting point in the approach to the topic.

The Collins dictionary defines an ethnic group as:

*"A group of people sharing an identity which arises from a collective sense of a distinctive history. Ethnic groups possess their own culture, customs, norms, beliefs and traditions. There is usually a common language: boundary maintenance is observed between members .... Typically they are trans-generational and biologically self-perpetuating ... (but) not all ethnic groups are endogamous, however, and membership may be acquired through marriage or other socially approved routes." (Jary and Jary, 1991: 202.203)*

Robin Williams (1994: 53) provides another clear and simple enough statement:

*"Collectivities defined by birth and cultural or physical distinctiveness are ethnies -- which may or may not be ranked, and may or may not be internally stratified."*

Williams' addition is useful because he reminds us that ethnic groups need not be instances of total commonality and homogeneity, and he also reminds us that ethnic groups are not always located on the same level next to each other in over-arching societies and that there can be quite sharp differences in the collective status of ethnic groups. These differentiating factors within ethnicity are of cardinal importance, as later discussion following Donald Horowitz (1985) will show.

The discussion offered by the Collins dictionary elaborates on the first definition under the heading of ethnicity, by adding that the shared characteristics of the ethnic group may be

actual or perceived, that ethnicity can incorporate racial distinctions. but that strictly racial characteristics are not necessarily or even usually a feature of ethnic criteria.

One notes that Williams, by referring to physical differences, includes race under the rubric of ethnicity. Many definitions do not encompass racial categories, but as will be argued later as well, it is appropriate to include some types of racial identities as elements of ethnicity. Here one must make an obvious distinction between racial identity and racism -- the latter is a different topic and the "*groups*" created in the process can be stereotypes imposed on people. Racial identity, on the other hand, can be a component of ethnicity and it can be a variant of ethnicity. If race were merely a matter of pigmentation, hair texture and sundry other differences in typical appearance, it would be singularly trivial as a social marker. Race categories, however, sometimes in response to racism, can also be self-conscious identities, and can become a matter of pride, of disparagement, a basis for mobilisation and vexed policy debate, precisely because race can acquire the symbolic and emotional content which characterises other ethnic identities. Many examples exist of just how trivial or minute some ethnic markers can be, and although the physical differences of race, *as such*, are an absurd basis for any distinctiveness of a relevant social kind, their associations, or correlates, as with lifestyles, values, sense of common ancestry, accents and the like, are precisely the components of typical ethnic identity. As Horowitz puts it

*"It is not the attribute that makes the group, but the group and group differences that make the attribute important."* (Horowitz, 1985:50)

If race has acquired importance in ethnic differentiation, it has to be taken seriously as an ethnic marker. In an analysis focused on South African society it is particularly important not to exclude racial identity from the analysis, as it is almost certainly a factor which interacts with ethnic identity in complex and intimate ways.

The discussion in the Collins dictionary referred to above also makes the point that not only culture and lifestyle, but religion can be a component of ethnicity. Religion can add a particular quality to ethnic commitments which will be discussed in due course. Where ethnicity is associated with political goals and claims, and where territory is at stake, then

the form it takes is that of nationalism, which for present purposes will be regarded as a sub-type of the more general phenomenon of ethnicity.

As the definition would suggest, the term "*ethnic*" is usually seen as being synonymous with that of a "*people*", or "*volk*" as it would be termed in Germanic languages. The concept of a "*people*" is both powerful in its connotations and very broad. What makes the concept of a *volk* or a "*people*" useful, is that it is clearly more intimate in its social content than the modern Western concept of a "*nation*" -- a constitutional and legal category, synonymous with the concept of a state (Ra'anan, 1991: 3-32) 1.). Since ethnicity is usually associated with differences in culture and identity within states, the notion of a "*people*" is what ethnicity is all about. This notion of "*peoplehood*" is usually formulated within the group interaction in a historical context -- a context which might emphasise either common biological origin or ties of blood, or a historical phase within which the group acquired defining characteristics. The origins or the defining characteristics may be objective realities or they may be constructions which have emerged over time -- the "*defining myth*" of the group. The essential feature would be a sense of affinity and association with that defining myth.

The term "*communal*" identity or identification can also be used in addition to the term ethnic identity. Communal identity can be taken to refer to forms of social identification which are somewhat wider than ethnic identity. The definition of ethnicity offered above does cover religious characteristics, but it is conceivable for there to be even wider inclusion, and the term communal identity may serve this purpose. Schermerhorn (1970: 159) explains:

*"The term 'communal' has come into general use in Asian regions to denote collectivities of religious, linguistic, national or caste nature, defined as a homogeneous whole and exerting their power as a unit in political affairs."*

One might add to the inclusion under the word communal, the category of region or locality which could be a multi-ethnic form of organisation.



Ethnic identities are notoriously subtle. The notion of ethnic or communal "*markers*" -- empirical indices -- which has proved to be very useful in many kinds of analyses of the phenomenon, cannot necessarily encompass all the criteria which enter into the group content and boundaries involved. Michael Moerman, for example, who conducted fieldwork among the Lue of Thailand, found that a powerful sense of "*Lueness*" was not necessarily consonant with objective cultural traits. He concluded that

*"Someone is Lue by virtue of believing and calling himself Lue and acting in ways which validate his Lueness."* (Moerman, 1965: 1219)

Erikson concludes that

*"... cultural difference between two groups is not the decisive feature of ethnicity ... they must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves."* (Thomas Erikson, 1993: 11)

Erikson is also pointing out, therefore, that the definition is more frequently than not mutual, and that an ethnic definition is in part a self-definition but also involves being so defined by others. Erikson is also making the consequential and vital point that for an ethnic identity to exist or to have a social salience, groups must have a minimum of contact with each other. Without inter-ethnic interaction, any real or imagined cultural differences or distinctiveness is completely irrelevant, both in the community itself and for social and political analysis.

Roosens (1989: 12) underlines this when he observes that the Flemish in Brussels, who are exposed to French every day, are much more likely to become self-consciously Flemish than their ethnic brothers and sisters in isolated rural areas in Flanders which are exclusively Flemish-speaking.

The authors quoted immediately above and many others may dislodge the concept of identity from objective markers, but they all tend to retain the notion of particular in-group assumptions about their more-or-less unique ethnic identity. Erikson, in similar vein to many other authors, argues that:

*"... ethnic groups tend to have myths of common origin and they nearly always have ideologies encouraging endogamy, which may be of highly varying practical*

*importance ... In this way [ethnicity] has a political and organisational aspect as well as a symbolic one."* (Erikson, 1993: 12)

Manning Nash (1988) has proposed that the metaphors of bed, blood and cult are essential to ethnicity. A group of soccer fans, stamp collectors or opera-lovers may have an intense self-identification but they cannot be an ethnic group. In terms of this view ethnicity implies some traits, or imagined traits, in common which cannot be changed, are perceived to be unchangeable, or can only be changed with great difficulty, requiring at least some kind of "*rites of passage*" or ritual conversion. These views would suggest that a class cannot be an ethnic group, no matter how mobilised, cohesive or conscious of its identity it might be -- it cannot have the connotations of blood, bed and cult.

In other words, even those definitions of ethnicity which reject the necessity of there being objectively-based factors in the concept -- one part of the core primordial position -- and fully acknowledge all the manifest fluidity in the concept, retain the view that when one is talking about ethnicity, one is dealing with beliefs of descent, common ancestry and some kind of constructed concept of biological or cultural uniqueness.

To revert for a moment to the other variants of "*communal*" identity, what would theoretically distinguish religious identity from that of an ethnic group is the nature of the enduring defining myth or feature of group identity. Hence a confessional or religious group, instead of developing or holding a definition based on common ancestry or biological inter-relatedness, would have a transcendent myth of a special kind of relatedness to God, a special calling or some other supernatural identity or concept. In the case of peoples who practice ancestor worship, the ethnic and the confessional group converge, since the ancestors define both types of inter-relatedness.

In practice, however, transcendent and ancestral myths often run together and it is often difficult to disentangle the religious from the ethnic identity. This may be the case in Northern Ireland, for example, where many Protestants trace their ancestry to Scottish settler communities and the Catholics trace theirs back to an indigenous Irish heritage.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of disentangling religion from ethnic identity where the two converge, George de Vos provides an interesting conceptual schema in which he makes a distinction between religious and ethnic identity as alternative basic forms of social identity. In terms of his schema the former are "*future orientated*" in the sense that they are intended as vehicles for an escape from a more constrained or frustrating present, towards a new identity, while the latter, ethnic identity, is "*past*" oriented, seeking to affirm an identity with a real or imagined historical condition. This distinction is important because the future orientation may lower the salience of ethnic ties, but de Vos does point out that the two may be mutually supportive as escapes from a constrained present (de Vos, George, 1995: ch 1.)

It follows from the foregoing, and in anticipation of observations in the next chapter, that once an ethnic identity has crystallised, it can and often does become a receptacle or vessel to which instrumental interests can be added or within which other non-ethnic interests can cohere. Indeed such extraneous interests can conceivably strengthen or even encourage the crystallisation and coherence of the particular identity. Hence an ethnic group can develop competitive material and power interests, and in the case of ethno-nationalist movements, such interests would amount to a fully blown geo-political and constitutional agenda.

The acceptance of ethnicity as the product of a process of interaction in which an identity may even be created, raises the question of its generic status. Does it have a consistent underpinning? Is there some aspect or level of ethnic attachment which is always available to be evoked, which might contribute to its significance for social action? While descriptive definitions of ethnicity are reasonably straightforward, definitions which seek to identify the layers of the dynamic underlying ethnicity have to be more complex. These questions are vital to the understanding of the persistence or otherwise of the phenomenon, and will have to be addressed at some length in the next chapter.

#### 1.4 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDY

In chapter 3, the author Ted Robert Gurr is quoted as saying that many general comparative analyses suffer from explanatory weakness because they lack the "*fine-grained*" evidence which can enhance the precision of generalisations (Gurr, 1993: 189). A case study of a society, in which all the major factors which one might assume to be involved in ethnic action are present, can offer the opportunity of bringing to bear the more detailed evidence to which Gurr refers.

South Africa today seems a good place to begin to look more carefully at the more detailed and finely textured conditions under which ethnic dissent may arise. And within South Africa, the Afrikaners are an excellent example on which to focus major attention in such an exploration. As already indicated, this is particularly so because recent signs of group "*decomposition*" among Afrikaners pose very challenging questions about the ways in which ethnicity responds to over-arching political and social forces.

Afrikaners, here referring particularly to white Afrikaans-speakers, certainly were a reasonably well-established and consciously self-defined category of people, with a history of ethnic articulation and mobilisation. At the time of South Africa's transition from minority rule to an open democracy from 1989 onwards, the fear was often expressed, or the prediction made, that Afrikaners, until then in a position of supreme power as a language and racial group, would resist the process and attempt to reassert their power position. There were indeed prominent signs that this would occur, seen in far right wing attempts to destabilise the early "Codesa" negotiations. But the nascent instability subsided after prompt state action, and it seemed to be based more on naivety and hysteria than on determined organisation and realistic strategy (see final chapters). Following the transition to open democracy Afrikaner ethnic power has been virtually eclipsed. In contrast, other ethnic minorities in South Africa, the traditional Zulus in particular, have largely maintained their ethnic coherence. An assessment of the factors associated with these divergent trends can contribute significantly to our understanding of the ethnic dynamic.

It should be noted that in the rest of this dissertation, when the term Afrikaners is used, it will refer to white or caucasian Afrikaans-speakers. Where Afrikaans-speakers of mixed

blood are included, this will be specified or else the term used will be "*Afrikaans-speakers*". There is no disguised racial motive in this distinction; it is made simply because the historical ethnic solidarity among Afrikaners has largely been limited to the white segment of the language group.

Afrikaans-speakers, both white and those of mixed blood, in 1996 comprised about 4,13 million adults of 15 years and older out of a total adult population of some 26,8 million; roughly 15 per cent. Afrikaans-speakers are the second largest language group after Zulu-speakers, who comprise over 20 per cent of the adult population (Statistics SA, 1998). According to the 1996 census, the white "*Afrikaner*" ethnic group, however, amounts to some 7,4 per cent of the total adult population of 15 years and older, or 1.97 million people. Among adults they are outnumbered by Zulu-speakers, Xhosa-speakers and by English speakers of all races, but they outnumber white English-speakers by about 1.6 to 1.<sup>2</sup>

Afrikaners display considerable internal differentiation in lifestyles and socio-economic circumstances, and, as will be demonstrated in later chapters, also as regards degree of ethnic commitment. In the years of the rise of Afrikaans nationalism, and particularly from the nineteen thirties onward, a very large and eventually dominant "*core*" group emerged within white Afrikaans-speakers, self-defined in terms of allegiance to the Nationalist, later National, Party and of membership of one of the three Afrikaans-language Reformed churches (Giliomee, 1979:104-127).

This ethnic core has since become somewhat diffuse with the growth of Afrikaans membership of Evangelical churches and the Presbyterian church and by virtue of splits which occurred in the National Party in 1969 and 1982, and considerable subsequent fragmentation. The diffusion of the political core of Afrikaner nationalism was also accompanied by an increase in support for the National Party among white English-speakers.

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<sup>2</sup> Consultations by a population committee of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) during 1998 reflected a widespread view among South African demographers that the 1996 census undercounted whites by between 300 000 and 700 000 people. The white Afrikaner group may well be larger than the figures given above.

Unlike many minorities elsewhere in the world, Afrikaners have no region of concentration, and hence no "*home*" territory, being widely dispersed all over South Africa. In all other respects, however, they are more than merely a language group. Despite political and economic divisions, Afrikaners have the following distinctiveness based on four superimposed criteria for ethnic categorisation, namely language, racial composition (see earlier comments on race as a possible ethnic feature), a sense of common origin and a broad concentration of membership of Calvinist (Reformed) churches. Taken singly, these criteria are certainly not distinctive; indeed they could be argued to create the possibility of bonds of association with other groups in South Africa. In combination they are more distinctive, but even so, as objective features they are not necessarily a conclusive basis for a distinctive ethnic identity. As the earlier reference to Horowitz (1985:50) has suggested, however, what is more important than the criteria themselves is the meaning which the group itself invests in the differentiating criteria. Afrikaners have certainly taken the four linked attributes as the their definition of themselves (Giliomee 1979:116).

In the case of Afrikaners, the sense of origin is not "*primordial*" with connotations of common descent from a single ancestral stock. The commonality derives from the origin in the Dutch settlement at the Cape in 1652 and subsequent additions to the original settler group. As it happened, the composition of the original white settlers was not dominantly Dutch. The Dutch East India Company established the settlement but that early "*multinational corporation*" had attracted, in addition to Dutch employees, German, Flemish and Scandinavian seamen as personnel, and the Dutch contributed less than half of the original settlers. The Dutch settlers themselves were multi-ethnic, undoubtedly comprising Frieslanders as well as Hollanders and other Netherlanders. Subsequent settlement by French Huguenot refugees from religious persecution expanded the settler group, as did later contributions by Germans, Irish, Scots, Portuguese, Malays and Eastern European Jewish adventurers and traders (in the case of the Scots the initial increment comprised Presbyterian Calvinist missionaries imported by the British in an attempt to Anglicise the Dutch-speaking settlers). Although there was a high degree of endogamy within the white settler community, assisted at one stage by the deliberate importation of

orphaned Dutch teenagers, there was a small amount of race admixture between white men and indigenous Khoi women as well -- altogether accounting for around 6 per cent of the gene pool. (Various authoritative accounts of the early white settlement in South Africa may be referred to, inter alia T.R.H Davenport (1987), *South Africa: a Modern History*.) The process of settlement was, therefore, somewhat of a "*melting pot*", but nevertheless, the official Dutch identity of the original settlement and the emergence of Afrikaans from variants of spoken Dutch at the time was sufficient to provide the Afrikaner group with at least a unifying focus as regards its origins.

Afrikaners are also very interesting as a case study because they are one of the ethnic groups whose leaders have relinquished a position of power and dominance voluntarily, albeit under extreme moral, economic and political pressure, in 1994. The shift from apartheid occurred first as a response by leaders in the Afrikaans community seeking to establish a basis for durable co-existence in a mixed society. Many of them, President de Klerk possibly included, did so in the somewhat innocent or naive assumption fostered by some prominent Afrikaner opinion-leaders, that they would enjoy significant participation as a group on a permanent basis in the ongoing governance of the country, and would enjoy full scope for "*coexistence*" as a defined cultural group within a multi-cultural society.

As it has happened, however, for Afrikaners who supported the political liberalisation of the society because they thought that they would retain significant political influence as a group, it was a massive "ruse". It was a ruse in the sense the Afrikaner cabinet leadership involved in the negotiations, whether deliberately or as a result of a loss of political will, lost sight of the commitments to minority rights, safeguards and participation that it had explicitly made over the whole period of early transition from 1989 onwards (see Isak de Villiers, Foreword, and chapter 1. of du Toit, Z.B., 1999). After a mere two years of power-sharing in a government of national unity, the National Party, which had gained support as the champion of the new "*accommodation*", found that its understanding of the government by consensus was not shared by its partner in government, the electorally dominant ANC, and withdrew into opposition.

The position of the Afrikaans language, as well as many prominent Afrikaans place names and the official status of Afrikaans cultural heritage, has been reduced to virtually that of all the other non-English-speaking minority cultural groups in South African society. While the equity of the new arrangements in the context of eleven language communities in South Africa is difficult to challenge, the fact is that Afrikaans language and culture has suffered quite dramatic and rapid loss of status in the society. While the status of other minority languages is no more favourable, relative to Afrikaans, they have a rather poorly developed literature, virtually non-existent scientific and technical terminology and are not understood at all outside of Southern Africa. Afrikaans, on the other hand, has had a vigorous literature, has developed a scientific and technical terminology virtually on a par with English and as a "*cousin-language*" to Dutch and Flemish and "*second-cousin*" language to German, it can either be understood or easily learned by most Northern Europeans. Many Afrikaners find the downgrading of the language particularly painful in the light of its achievements.

Although the major focus of this investigation will be the Afrikaners, their responses will be compared with those of other cultural minorities in order to fully contextualise the analysis. These other minorities include:

- White English-speakers; a group of varied origins but mainly descended from an original core of British settlers. Today the English-speaking white group is not regarded as an ethnic group in the conventional sense, firstly because its primary "*marker*" -- the English language -- has become so universally used in South Africa that it does not offer any particular distinctiveness, and secondly because one level of identification of this group is international Anglo-Saxon culture. Within the group, however, there may be cultural residues of older origins -- Scots, Irish, Welsh and English in particular, and there are also current ethnic minorities such as the Jewish group in particular.
- The so-called "*coloured*" (Mulatto) group is clearly identified as a category of pigmentation, but more difficult to describe as an ethnic group. While some three-quarters of this group speak Afrikaans, aside from the educated elites, all people in the



group speak both Afrikaans and English with a very distinctive style and intonation; more distinctive in fact than say American English or Scots English as these may contrast with standard English. There is also a tendency among some coloured people to refer to themselves as "*Afrikaanses*" as opposed to "*Afrikaners*", and to their language as "*Kaaps*" instead of Afrikaans. Others regard themselves as "*brown*" Afrikaners. Clearly a complex process of identity crystallisation is taking place.

- A "*sub-category*" of coloureds are people of Muslim faith descended from the Malay slaves who came to South Africa in the 16th and 17th centuries. Here again one may have to do with a latent or nascent ethnic group, reinforced by the Islamic faith.
- Nine language groups within the African majority in the country, some very large like Zulu and Xhosa-speakers, and some smaller like Changana-Tsonga and Venda, but none of them insignificant. These language communities are all on a continuum of variation between deep rural traditionalism linked to particular "*tribal*" cultural centres, and modern urban status in the polyglot environments of the urban areas.
- South Africans of Indian origin. This group, however, is divided between Hindus, Muslims, Christians and smaller faiths, and within the confessional groups there are variations in cultures of origin, mainly Hindi, Tamil, Telegu, Urdu and Gujarati.

The situation of the other ethnic minorities in South Africa may be somewhat less complex than that of Afrikaners. Ethnic expression among minorities other than white has been subdued by apartheid, which tended to create a non-white cross-ethnic solidarity which, although weakening, is still pervasive among many elites and the intelligentsia within black and brown minorities. The English-speaking white minority, on the other hand, while experiencing many of the same policy impacts as Afrikaners, at least does not have to be concerned about the survival of its language.

This dissertation will attempt to assess the salience and scope of claims by Afrikaners to the reinstatement of the language and cultural heritage of Afrikaners to a position of co-

primary status and social "*honour*" in South Africa, and the likelihood of ethnic resistance among Afrikaners in the future, should these claims be frustrated. More specifically it will assess the scope and significance of a recent decline in the political solidarity of white Afrikaners, and attempt to understand the implications of a possible divergence between political, cultural and social organisation among Afrikaners. In other words, it will examine the way in which Afrikaner ethnicity has fragmented under the impact of changes in power relations and the structure of material opportunity in the society, and will attempt to assess the implications for future responses by Afrikaners. Hence, as suggested in the first section of this chapter, it will examine the processes and prospects relevant to either the defensive resurgence of Afrikaner ethnicity or to its possible dissipation, decline and assimilation into wider social groupings in the society. On the assumption that comparisons may deepen the insights derived, it will pursue these topics, taking account of the reactions of other minorities as well. The research questions will be made more explicit at the end on the theoretical chapters.

The analysis will rely heavily on empirical survey-based evidence on attitudes among white Afrikaners in particular and other minorities in general, as well as drawing on special studies and documentary evidence of the various responses of Afrikaners and other minorities to their contemporary condition. The nature of the topic is such that the greatest need is to deepen insight rather than to propose fixed relationships between variables. The authors referred to earlier in this chapter have argued strongly, that what the topic needs most is a deepening of detail and a multi-faceted research approach taking account of many interacting variables simultaneously; an approach which does not lend itself to clearly conceptualised hypotheses of the textbook variety. At the end of the next two chapters, however, certain propositions will be made, some of which may suffice as hypotheses in the subsequent examination of evidence.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORY AND THE NATURE OF ETHNIC OR COMMUNAL IDENTITY

Any discussion of theory in relation to ethnicity can meander endlessly because of the wealth of contributions to the literature. Because of this and considerations of length, the coverage of the literature has had to be selective.

The research question posed at the outset directs a theoretical review to certain themes, namely those of ethnic maintenance and persistence and of ethnic mobilisation and demobilisation. To the extent, however, that the substance of ethnic commitments imparts a tenacity and intensity to the expressions of ethnicity, or the extent to which it might make ethnicity vulnerable to the impact of other forces in society, the issue of what ethnicity is all about is absolutely crucial. Horowitz makes this point in a slightly more specific but nevertheless relevant context when he says that:

*"Even if we grant arguendo that competition for scarce resources is what divides groups, this hardly explains why they are led to perceive and organize themselves along ethnic lines rather than along some other lines such as social class. Theories of ethnic conflict need to specify what the groups are fighting over, which is not as obvious as it seems ..."* (Horowitz, 1985:15)

The last theme mentioned above has to be dealt with first, simply because it raises the most fundamental questions about the nature of ethnicity. Hence this chapter has to be a fairly basic review of the nature of ethnicity. The literature on ethnic persistence, tenacity and mobilisation deserves a chapter on its own and will follow in chapter 3.

Therefore the chapter which follows is on how "*fundamental*" or not ethnicity is within the social dynamics of complex societies, or stated differently, to what extent it is an "*ineluctable*" or "*contingent*" phenomenon. The resonance of the phenomenon in society is the issue at stake and the question is therefore of obvious relevance to the propensity for conflict surrounding ethnic claims. The review is intended to provide the rest of this analysis with as secure a conceptual footing as possible.

## 2.1 ESTABLISHED VIEWS ON THE SUBSTANCE OF ETHNICITY

The heading immediately above may sound fairly innocuous but it points to a field of great tension and vehement disagreement among authors. This theoretical divide has assumed the dimensions of an intellectual faction fight, with typical patterns of argument and counter-argument, postulations and rejoinders which have wasted a great deal of academic time. Theodor Hanf, the German political sociologist explains:

*"For the social scientist this (the field of ethnic studies) is a minefield, -- a precarious place to do battle, both academically and ... politically. Two large armies of passionate researchers face each other, occasionally armed with elegant foils, though more often with heavy artillery. On the one side stand the ethnic "primordialists", for whom tribes, people, culture, kinship ties and emotional bonds are the stuff from which history is made. On the other side stands the brotherhood for whom everything the primordialists hold dear is but passing epiphenomena of economic interests and contradictions, i.e. "false consciousness"." (Hanf, 1989: 313f)*

The differences in viewpoints are not merely conceptual, but also reflect deeply held moral stances. Ethnicity has long been suggested to be a form of deviance or social pathology. An early, and influential, American review of social research commenced a chapter on ethnic relations with an outline of the "*problems of ethnic relations*", devoting a few paragraphs to the general phenomenon of ethnicity, but proceeding to devote most of the chapter to prejudice and discrimination (Berelson and Steiner 1964: ch. 12). Dench (1986: 6) discussing the British liberal reaction to Maltese ethnicity in the UK, speaks of the concept of an "*individualist utopia*" of assimilation: "... *sublimely ignoring the strength of ethnocentric currents ... and treating ... intolerance as something that would simply go away if right-thinking folk repudiated it ...*". Any review of theory on ethnicity is made more complex by such well-meaning moral impositions on the phenomenon itself.

Williams (1994: 50), quoting Russel and Starr (1989), suggests that one half of the world's states experienced significant ethnic conflict after World War II up to the late eighties, and that about 80 per cent of the deaths in warfare in that period occurred in ethnic conflicts internal to national states.

One might assume that if ethnic identities were little more than social labels or lifestyle categories, divorced of fundamental meanings or strong emotional investments, this formidable record would be surprising. Also, if ethnicity was little more than an optional surrogate for class solidarities or status competition, it would be fair to ask why it should be so frequently evoked. Classes, status groups and political constituencies have demonstrated that they are perfectly capable of finding other rationalisations to support the pursuit of their strategic and material interests. It is precisely the apparent "resonance" and reasons for the ubiquity of the phenomenon which have to be understood if we are to assess what seems to be the tenacity of ethnicity and its potential for conflict.

For these reasons it is appropriate to focus the review of theory on the underlying nature of ethnicity -- on its intrinsic aspects -- in order to form judgements about why ethnic and communal identity as such appears to have the tenacity and resonance to so frequently form the basis of conflict, protest or rebellion and whether these qualities are really as general, invariant and resistant to other forces as appearances would suggest.

It has struck this author that in many, if not most studies of ethnic phenomena, there is a tendency to leap over these very basic questions in order to address more immediate topics like the details of inter-ethnic conflict and reconciliation, precipitating factors in inter-group interaction and conflict, or patterns in ethnic movements and suchlike. Horowitz makes the point that

*"In intellectual terms, ethnic relations has been a field rife with dogma (descriptive detail could be added) and yet lacking in agreement on first principles."* (Horowitz, 1985: 14)

A particular author will all too often proceed with an analysis equipped with one or another, sometimes unstated assumption about what ethnic identity is. Perhaps it is this common short-cut which has made it so difficult for social science to achieve a reasonable consensus about the nature of and appropriate response to ethnic phenomena. Many social scientists still find themselves in deep disagreement with each other, not about the facts or patterns of ethnic behaviour, but over their interpretations of those facts or behaviour.

The obvious first task, then, is to outline the various major "schools", or perhaps more appropriately, "camps", in the study of ethnicity: the so-called objective ("objectivist") or "primordial" position, the so-called "constructivist" perspective, and thirdly, what may or may not be a variation of the constructivist position, often called the "instrumental" position. Gellner (see chapter 1) distinguished between a primordial and a modernist position; the latter being consonant with the constructivist viewpoint (Gellner, 1998: 13).

### 2.1.1 THE "PRIMORDIAL" PERSPECTIVE

The terms objective or primordial are both applied to this particular perspective. It assumes that there is a basic, fixed and universal attribute in human interaction underlying ethnic ties, a factor almost akin to a species-affinity or herd instinct. Obviously, however, not all the views encompassed in this approach would endorse a biological imperative or instinct. But at least the assumption is that there is an imperative of a social or psychological kind which is independent of the surrounding social field; hence the term "*objective*".

The position owes much to Edward Shils (1957) and Clifford Geertz (1963). Shils sees the content of ethnicity as ties of blood and descent which possess such fundamental and socially significant relational qualities as to be "*primordial*", and which therefore acquire what he calls an "*ineffable significance*" (Shils, 1957: 142). Various other authors, including Geertz, have come to accept the linkages of descent as the defining essence of ethnicity, and as one of the "*givens*" or assumed givens of social existence: an "*... absolute import attributed to the very tie itself*" (Geertz, 1963: 109). Clifford Geertz for example describes the developing, former colonial societies he studied as characterised by a tension between two kinds of fundamental expectations and commitments. On the one hand, there is a desire for progress, rising standard of living, effective governance and social justice. but on the other hand "*... the desire to be recognised as responsible agents ... a search for identity and a demand that identity be publicly acknowledged as having import.*" (Geertz, 1963: 108) These commitments he saw to be deeply intertwined with primordial attachments, following Shils:

*"By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the "givens" -- or more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed "givens" -- of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the "givenness" that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices." (Geertz, 1963: 109)*

This feature was described later by Harold Isaacs as essential tribalism (Isaacs: 1975/1989).

This assumption of some form of essentiality linked to origin is problematic because of the manifest genetic heterogeneity of even those ethnic groups which claim strict endogamy and the equally manifest permeability of ethnic boundaries. Because of the importance of the propositions in the primordialist camp to the focus of this study, however, some additional attention has to be given to the literature within this framework.

Pierre van den Berghe has gone somewhat further than Shils, referred to earlier, in seeking an absolute root of identity. He finds it difficult to accept that the basis of ethnicity can be constructed, imagined or subjectively-based:

*"If ... (these views) were correct, an ethnic group exists whenever two or more people say so. If ... I found it expedient to organize left-handed people as an oppressed minority and declared left-handers to constitute an ethnic group, and if I could find a few people to agree with me ... then according to the extreme subjectivist view, left-handers would indeed be an ethnic group." (Van den Berghe, 1979: 27)*

Following E.O. Wilson (1975), van den Berghe applies a social Darwinist concept of *"inclusive fitness"* to ethnic solidarity (1981, 1986). His viewpoint on ethnicity is rooted in the concept of the ethnic group as a *"superfamily"*, an extension of kinship and an expression of a genetic drive to kin-selection in reproduction. Because the extended kinship group share genes, and because endogamy is assumed to be conducive to *"inclusive fitness"*,

*"ethnocentrism, nepotism, tribalism, nationalism, sectarianism, parochialism, racism -- all these nasty isms that lead us to prefer insiders to outsiders -- are biologically derived because they contribute to the actors inclusive fitness."*

*The general paradigm is that individual organisms behave, consciously or unconsciously, in such a way as to maximise their inclusive fitness."*  
(1981:37)

Hence, for van den Berghe, cultural and genetic development take place in relation to one another in a process of co-evolution, and ethnic solidarities are intimately bound up in the process.

As one might expect, van den Berghe's arguments are highly controversial. They also appear to be hypothetical, awaiting proof, and it is difficult to imagine how proof of a biological drive could be adduced.

Van den Berghe, however, does not drive this point to absurdity, he allows for some social variability:

*"To say that kin relation is the underlying basis of ethnic solidarity allows only the grossest of predictions, because social relationships take place not in abstract but in an environment ... of scarce resources. A multiplicity of circumstances dictate the actual content of relationships ..."* (1981:37)

Van den Berghe acknowledges that race, for example, is a social construct (1978: 406-409). Kinship is to a lesser or greater degree a meaning imposed on a group -- it is more or less "*fictitious*" (1981:22 *passim*). His notion of the root of ethnicity turns out, then, to be a symbolic one, an idealised notion and therefore it is variable. Van den Berghe, therefore, is a demonstration that some primordialists may not in fact "*reify*" ties of blood to the extent that they have often been accused of doing.

Much blander and less challenging versions of the endogamy position can be found in the literature. Although ethnic in-group endogamy is by no means an iron law of ethnic interaction in the world, there tends to be a sufficiently pervasive, if inefficient and inconsistent, tendency towards it in world communities to suggest that it is one of the regularities of human social behaviour. Percy Cohen, the British sociologist has this to say:

*"Clearly what makes such group solidarity and inter-group rivalry ethnic, rather than anything else, is the fact that each group possesses a distinct culture (this author would add, or thinks that it possesses a*



*distinct culture). In addition, what makes ethnic persistence possible is the confinement of marriage and procreation largely within the ethnic group. The key to ethnic preservation is the maintenance of an internal culture including the social controls which prohibit others from having marital access to one's women; hence inter-ethnic sexual exclusion comes to possess strong symbolic significance. Thus each group will define its identity in terms of certain key cultural symbols and will define its limits in terms of the permissibility of sexual access; so that in time, sexual exclusion and jealousy become part of a larger set of sentiments and ideas which inform ethnicity."* (Cohen: 1976: 24)

There are patterns of widespread inter-ethnic marriage in industrialised societies today which would challenge this assumption of a general and persistent interaction between ethnic in-group cultural or imagined cultural traits and a tendency towards endogamy. The very high rate of intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles in Europe today (estimated at 50 per cent, The Economist, November 16-22, 1996), or between Japanese, Chinese and Caucasian Americans, for example, would be a particular challenge to his position. On the other hand, however, one may ask whether in the idealised culture of middle-class white Europeans and Americans, the image and reality of Jewish, Chinese and Japanese social values (self discipline, hard work and commitment to family values) have not made them "*honorary WASPS*", as it were. When such patterns of widespread ethnic intermarriage do occur, do they not perhaps indicate a process of ethnic group "*twinning*" as a precursor to ethnic assimilation and consequent redefinition under a broader label? Cohen's argument, therefore, might have to be broadened to make room for the possibility of ethnic assimilation and the "*ethnic*" rules which govern it.

It is interesting that Geertz, one of the major defenders of the primordial position, accepts that the ethnic category can originate from or consist of subjective or imagined conceptualisations or imagined communities (Geertz, 1993: 394f). Hence his conception of primordiality does not rest on the objective fact of common descent. Yelvington (1991) has also used the term "*fictitious kinship*". This implies that the objects of the identification are variable and not necessarily linked to specific historical kin relations, and that they can shift and mutate.

Quite aside from all kinds of methodological and conceptual criticisms which one may make of the theories which rest on socio-biological explanations, the fact that there can be and very frequently are "surrogate" ethnic solidarities, like confessional and religious communalism without any suggestion of a genetic factor (Catholics in Ireland, for example, could hardly be described as a substantially pure gene pool) means, that these theories cannot address the question posed about the inevitability and "fixity" of ethnic identifications.

This objective variability, accepted by some "primordialists" themselves, may be argued to introduce ambivalence in the broad position, and raise the question of whether or not the variability does not negate the notion of the "givenness" referred to earlier as one of the cornerstones of the primordial position. One also has to accept the simple probability that there are numerous and largely unnoticed categories of people which could have become "ethnic groups" but which have chosen to assimilate into broader social categories.

Most of the discussion above shows that the crude primordialist position, or one which assumes objective realities of exclusiveness based on descent simply cannot be sustained. At the same time, however, to throw the concept out entirely would represent a huge loss in the understanding of the phenomenon. Mindful of this, Horowitz is very firm:

*"I have insisted on describing ethnic affiliations as involving descent. The principle of ethnic membership is typically the birth principle, however much it may be diluted in practice by fictive extensions."*  
(Horowitz, 1985:83)

Earlier he makes the crucial points: "*Ethnicity is based on a myth of collective ancestry, which usually carries with it traits believed to be innate*" (p52) and, "*The putatively ascriptive character of ethnic identifications imparts to ethnic conflict its intense and permeative qualities*" (p54). Ethnicity may not be primordial; but to the extent that its symbolism, sentiments and the self-perceptions associated with it have intensity and persistence akin to that of kinship, the primordial perspective is essential to any analysis of ethnicity in action, as it were.

## 2.1.2 THE "CONSTRUCTIVIST" PERSPECTIVE

The constructivist position can be variously described but at basis it does not assume an invariate, socially independent and objective reality of association or descent as the basis of ethnicity. Instead it understands ethnicity as either the outcome of a collective belief in or myth of fundamental commonalities. Such commonalities can obviously include actual ties of blood or descent, but they can be imagined or "*constructed*" in the collective process of group self-definition (Max Weber, (1922/1968/1980), or in the processes of forming and maintaining ethnic boundaries. In the latter case the boundaries and the rules and rituals associated with those boundaries assume greater importance than the content of the culture-which-is enclosed within the boundary (Frederik Barth, 1969/70).

The view of Barth is compatible with a more general process explored by Frank Parkin (1979) and others, who following Max Weber, have called it "*social closure*". Those who have written on social closure do not relate it exclusively to ethnic boundary formation but to all forms of social demarcation in which groups seek to defend their interests or increase their advantages by restricting recruitment and access to membership of the group.

Max Weber can be included in this category of thought but there are aspects to Weber's thinking which deserve a separate treatment. A brief discussion of Weber, therefore, will follow in the next section, in 2.1.3.

The processes of boundary formation or a social construction based on collective beliefs therefore obviously can have some purpose or benefit, extrinsic to the "*content*" of the collectivity, and this "*extraneous*" element has been argued to overshadow the fact of the group self-concept and its boundaries. Frederik Barth is the author most closely associated with the constructivist position. He has explored the institutional action involved in group boundary maintenance, involving the establishment of shared goals and common rules of behaviour relevant to the boundaries. These practices are in turn capable of producing group solidarity, which is a strategic resource for a group in a competitive wider

system (Frederik Barth, 1969/1970). Perhaps equally important, Barth saw cultural characteristics and values as the consequences of ethnic group organisation.

As already stated, perhaps the major postulate in this approach is that ethnic groups are not most usefully understood in terms of their actual or putative origins or defining features but rather in terms of a dynamic process of boundary maintenance, and in terms of features attributed to them in the interaction with other groups:

*"The critical focus ... becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group and not the cultural stuff that it encloses ... If a group maintains its identity when members interact with others, this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signalling membership and exclusion."* (Barth: 1969:15)

Particular features or markers of a group in Barth's view should not be seen as the causes of ethnic differentiation but rather as the signals and symbols established by the group in its communication, both with its own members and to outsiders in the process of boundary maintenance. Therefore, the inner content of ethnicity is less important than the very complex and self-reinforcing processes of group boundary maintenance:

*"... the ethnic boundary canalizes social life -- it entails a frequently quite complex organisation of behaviour and social relations. The identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgement. It thus entails the assumption that the two are fundamentally "playing the same game" ... a dichotomization of others as ... members of another ethnic group implies a recognition of limitations on shared understandings, differences in criteria for judgement of value and performance ..."* (Barth, 1969: 15)

This process-based approach to the understanding of ethnicity -- a process of boundary maintenance and consequential internal structuring of ethnic characteristics, leads Barth to say that ethnic categories

*"... may be of great relevance to behaviour, but they need not be; they may pervade all social life, or they may be relevant only in limited sectors of activity."* (14)

He would certainly not accept a thesis of inevitability. Barth, however, assumed even wider benefits and consequences on ethnicity when he pointed out that *"ethnic categories provide an organisational vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content"* (Barth, 1969: 14). The content of the vessel, however, is not the central point of Barth -- it is the vessel itself and the processes that create its structure.

There is no doubt that this perspective adds to the analytical utility of the concept of ethnicity, but here again, one must guard against throwing the proverbial baby out with the bath water. Donald Horowitz, for example, accepts that ethnic boundaries are mutable, that fusion and fission can occur, that boundary definitions change in terms of utilities and transactions within the wider society, that *"Political choices are also made by group leaders as assimilation and differentiation proceed"* (p6), but he reminds us that

*"Group boundaries are made of neither stone nor putty ... They are malleable within limits. The mutability of boundaries does not mean that ethnic affiliations are merely "strategic" (p66) ... leaders cannot call into play an identity that is not founded on judgements of relative likeness and difference." (p70)*

Here again there are clearly merits in an integration of insights.

### 2.1.3 THE "INSTRUMENTAL" PERSPECTIVE

In terms of the classification being adopted here, in the instrumental perspective the content, purpose and the competitive salience of the vessel of ethnic group formation is the critical element. In the light of the last quotation from Barth, this third perspective -- the instrumental view -- might appear as an obvious conceptual extension of the constructivist position. This, however, need not be the case, because the constructivists emphasise the process and the instrumentalists emphasise the content of the interests which might influence or inform the process.

Within this category of view, however, one has to include more than one approach. For present purposes a distinction will be made between three broad

positions: "*ethnicity as contingent*", ethnicity as a "*deflection of class opposition*" and "*ethnicity as a substantive structure in social competition or conflict*":

#### ETHNICITY AS CONTINGENT FACTOR IN STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS:

This viewpoint is most closely associated with Marxist views and it tends to assign a reduced importance to ethnicity relative to class as a force in society. First Marx and Engels see the realm of sentiment and ideas, of which ethnicity and culture would be a part, as the outflow or consequence of material conditions:

*"The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life ... the direct efflux of their material behaviour. ... The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life process ... Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness ... have no history, no development, but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse ... alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking ... Life is not determined by consciousness but consciousness by life."* (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, in David Horowitz (1971:25)

In line with these views Marx tended to regard authentic ethnic attachments as historical left-overs with very little role in the modern capitalist state; indeed more inclined to be counter-revolutionary than anything else (Rosa Luxemburg (Ed.) Davis, 1976:124-5). As Lockwood (1970) argues, the basic marxist position was to see class as the fundamentally necessary interest in the modern social system in contrast to status and other interests, like ethnicity, which were contingent phenomena clouding the analysis.

As one would expect from a secondary or contingent phenomenon, ethnic commitments are not seen by the Marxists as having the potency of class interests. Westergaard and Resler (1975), Lockwood (1970), Luxemburg (1976) and others have argued, its capacity to generate intense conflicts notwithstanding, ethnic conflict is reactive, while only class mobilisation has the sweeping power to transform society and alter its most fundamental structures.

Ethnicity, as a derived phenomenon, has potential for rebellion, but not for revolution.

#### ETHNICITY AS A DEFLECTION OF CLASS OPPOSITION

John Stone points out that ethnicity has consistently been regarded by countless convinced critics of capitalism as an "*irrelevant epiphenomenon, a smoke-screen disguising the "objective" class relations which are the true cause of all social conflict*" (Stone, 1985: 64). Whatever the motivations of such authors, these views are an appropriate warning that underlying interests and the social power of such interests can achieve consequences which at face value appear to be more comprehensive, and which, whether so intended or not, serve to deflect attention from the core interests involved.

This perspective on ethnicity flows originally from the analysis of Marx which defines the realm of ideology, ideas and culture as the "*superstructure*" which reflects and is the outflow of the base economic structure. Marx was clear that one cannot understand a phenomenon on the basis of the consciousness of the actors involved. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, one cannot judge historical processes by their consciousness. The consciousness reflected in the superstructure does not have an authentic or independent significance (Marx 1989/1970:21). Lefebvre (1968: 76) draws out the added implication of Marx that:

*"It is the role of ideologies to secure the assent of the oppressed and exploited. Ideologies represent the latter to themselves in such a way as to wrest from them, in addition to material wealth, their spiritual acceptance of this situation, even their support."*

In this purpose it is possible to see the role of ethnicity as one of providing the masses with commitments which will support economically conservative forces or disguise the underlying interests of the ruling class. Kautsky (quoted in Nimmni: 114) saw nationalism in the modern nation state, for example, as the handmaiden and cover for the profit motives of commercial capital.

One must not oversimplify the picture of the Marxist analysis. Many authors in this tradition have allowed for a dialectical relationship between cultural superstructure and the economic base. Althusser (1969) sees three levels of determinism in society, the economic, the political and the ideological, and they are relatively autonomous but interact. At different historical epochs different levels will be more powerful. Althusser, however, is aligned with Marx in seeing the economic forces as the ultimate determinant, or the determinant in the final instance, although the final instance never manifests clearly in a concrete relationship. But it is clear that not all of Marxism is characterised by the notion that culture is merely an epiphenomenon and a process like ethnicity can have "*relative autonomy*". Suffice to say, however, the attribution to the economic level of final force of determination means that culture at any given time, will be responsive to the requirements of the economic structure.

#### ETHNICITY AS A SUBSTANTIVE STRUCTURE IN SOCIAL COMPETITION

This materialist perspective allows ethnicity a basic significance as a vehicle for competition and conflict in its own right. No longer are we dealing with an epiphenomenon but a materialist perspective which sees ethnicity as an alternative to class organisation.

This viewpoint is simply set out by Abner Cohen:

*"Ethnicity in modern society ... is the result of intensive struggle between groups over new strategic positions of power ... places of employment, taxation, funds for development, education, political position and so on."*  
(Cohen, 1974: 96)

This theme has been elaborated by many dozens of authors, particularly in the analysis of ethnic conflicts; for a review see, inter alia, Robin Williams jr. (1994).

Abner Cohen argues that ethnic groups in modern society are in the first instance "... *informally organised interest groups* ..." (Abner Cohen, 1974: 96). Even more importantly, Cohen argues that this ethnic articulation is likely to occur



when structural conditions or official policy or prohibitions make it difficult for the articulation of interests to occur within formal associations or processes. Cohen observes that ethnic groups will develop their rationale on the basis of cultural and historical claims but if new cleavages of interest arise which cut across the ethnic division, the ethnic coherence will tend to weaken. Ethnicity in these terms becomes a vessel, adorned with all the trappings of cultural meaning, but which is essentially there to promote instrumental objectives, and which will persist only as long as the particular interests are served.

Another approach within the same broad paradigm, which could be extended beyond its initial focus on the USA, is that of Blauner (Robert Blauner, 1976: 69-90). Blauner considers the circumstances and the degree of internal unity of "*non-white*" minorities in the USA and defines their situation as one of "*internal colonisation*". The power dominance of white America over the immigrant, enslaved or conquered peoples and the broader influence of a divisive racism on relations between the dominant group and the minorities and between minorities themselves, produces in the end a particular pattern of material disadvantage and insular cultural existence, which solidifies and becomes perpetuated as forms of minority ethnicity.

The more general interest in this type of analysis of minority ethnic group formation as a consequence of internal colonialism, dictated often by the needs for control of minority labour, is that many plural societies owe their internal differentiation to conquest and incorporation of people which initially had some base or sovereignty independent of the plural state. This would, for example, apply to the Scots, Welsh, Irish, Afrikaners, Zulus, Bretons, Basques -- in fact wherever one looks. A case could be made, therefore, for the analysis of ethnicity, in many if not most of its locations, as the consequence of peoples, drawn from a different political and economic context to their present one, being "*captured*" in a political economy which they do not control, and where the dominant system does not fully incorporate or assimilate them for reasons which relate to interests in the dominant political economy itself. Ethnicity, then, could be seen in these terms, as Stone (1985: 72) has observed, as a variant of the

dependency theory applied to relations between imperial powers and Third World states.

Hechter (1975) sees the pattern of polarisation as revolving around "*core*" and "*periphery*" cultures, involving a cultural division of labour. in the process of which the core proletariat uses its status advantage to exploit the peripheral proletariat.

Somewhat close to the classical Marxist position is Tom Nairn (1977:60, *passim*) who sees the entry of nationalist and separatist movements as structurally aligned with class movements but which take a detour, as it were, and in the process weaken or attempt to weaken the bourgeoisie or national establishment which is aligned with or protects the interests of capitalism. Although Nairn writes in the context of British movements, it is striking how many of the separatist movements in the world are in fact left-leaning in their ideological sympathies; the Basques being a prominent recent example. Nairn argues that the historical development of Marxism made it unavoidable that nationalism would be underestimated and poorly integrated into Marxist theory, but he remains true to the core position when he argues that the patterns in the world's capitalist political economy lie at the basis of the uneven development in nations that produces the nationalism phenomenon, which is

*"... a by-product of the most brutally hopelessly materialistic side of the history of the last two centuries."* (Nairn. 1977:335-6)

Nairn is one of many Marxists who have felt that the core positions have underestimated the salience and the intrinsic significance of national and ethnic attachments in the interacting mix of structures in the nation state. The "*Austro-Marxists*" were another category of Marxists who, while committed to the view that the more fundamental divisive principle remained class relations, were quite comfortable with the reality of "*organic*" national units within the Austro-Hungarian empire, and believed that the needs of these ethnic units should be accommodated. This perspective was most prominently expounded by Otto Bauer, who saw national character as an important distinction in the interplay of national and cross-national relations -- national character being the result of

both common material but also geographic and cultural historical experience: "*communities of fate*", based on reciprocal relationships between people -- see various contributions on Austro-Marxism and ethnicity in Ra'anani et al (Eds.) (1991).

The Austro-Marxists and the more recent Marxist critics of the core or classical Marxist position illustrate the diversity of viewpoints on nationalism and ethnicity within the broad Marxist paradigm: a diversity which is understandable in the light of the fact that both Lenin and Stalin had varied, but clear views to the effect that nationalities, albeit only at certain stages in the historical development of the international economy, had a right to self-determination. Therefore it is surprising that a "*core*" position in Marxism emerged with and after the Second and Third International which has been described as the "*epiphenomenalist*" and "*class reductionist*" position, which relates nationalism, culture and ethnicity to a derivative status, fundamentally formed and structured by the relations of production in the economic base. (For a discussion see Ephraim Nimni (1985).)

Most of the authors in the Marxist camp referred to immediately above would not like to be associated with writers outside the Marxist camp, but the content of their conclusions draws us very close to the position of Max Weber, who has already been covered in other context of ethnic boundary maintenance, but whose thinking on the topic was broader. Weber's views are certainly not easily categorised and can only be reconciled with instrumental views in a certain sense. Weber in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (1922/1980: 241, 239, passim) approached ethnicity as one of the elements in status, social worth or honour. At one point, however, he declares ethnicity to be a concept of singularly little utility for analysis in the social sciences. The reality and the effects of ethnic consciousness were seen by Weber to be indeterminate. As indicated he saw the ethnic group as a status group in society, along with other categories of status, and he saw the particular ethnic content as able to be evoked in the subjective sphere, as a rationale accompanying but not necessarily determining social action. Hence ethnicity, while certainly not an epiphenomenon but a fully-fledged status phenomenon in Weber's assessment, despite its very specific

symbolisms, nonetheless does not feature as having an independent significance in social action. Perhaps one might say that Weber saw ethnicity as one among a menu of status interests in society -- a subjective option for the populace in culturally differentiated society. Now this approach is "*instrumental*" only to the extent that ethnicity might accompany more determinate interests.

Nevertheless, for Weber ethnic groups were categories of interest in themselves, with the interest being social ranking or honour and the material rewards which would accompany it. Weber makes an important point when he argued that ethnicity was the specific honour of the masses, to whom other forms of social honour were denied. Ethnic status was available more generally than other forms of status which depended on ranked categories (Weber, 1968: 391). He also saw class and ethnic commitments as being able to alternate as vehicles for competitive struggles; class would tend to be dominant in times of material stress, whereas ethnicity would surface in times of prosperity (Weber, 1968: 389, *passim*). But perhaps most importantly of all, Weber was not convinced about the resilience of ethnic commitments, believing that they would be swept aside by the rise in the rationality of the modern bureaucratic state.

The acceptance of ethnic groups as categories of interests in themselves, *sui generis*, also appears frequently in more recent interpretations, one of the more famous being the analysis of Glazer and Moynihan, who saw ethnicity as a more typical or even more fundamental source of stratification in modern society than class -- indeed class to them is the secondary or often derivative structure (Glazer and Monihan, 1975, 16-17, *passim*). Daniel Bell (1975) accepts an equality of significance for both class and ethnicity and like Weber postulates that they can be alternative choices for mobilisation in society, but that they also may become fused. Bell notes that ethnic commitments move into the vacuum created by the decline in the solidarities which occupational mobility fosters in working class movements (Bell, 1975: 165-166, *passim*).

This "*instrumental*" interpretation of ethnicity as a form of interest "*articulation*" in its own right view opens the door to all manner of serious academic and semi-academic analyses which have concluded that particular elites with

commitments to power or material rewards have set about "*constructing*" inter-group hostilities as a means of promoting a particular solidarity in support of their agendas.

Summing up, ethnicity as a phenomenon, which is relegated to the status of a contingent or consequential phenomenon, is not the only perspective in a materialist or "*instrumental*" position. Even where this secondary status is accorded to ethnicity, however, there is significant variation in definitions of its importance in the understanding of social action.

Anticipating for a moment the South African situation, the most controversial position among the range of "*instrumental*" viewpoints reviewed is that of relegating ethnicity to the status of either a consequence of, or a cover or mechanism for the pursuit of class interests. These approaches, which have been referred to earlier as the epiphenomenalist and/or class reductionist approaches have at times been controversial even in Marxist circles. Eugene Genovese, for example, roundly condemned his Marxist colleagues for underestimating the effects of ethnic beliefs

*"... once an ideology arises it alters profoundly the material reality and in fact becomes a partially autonomous feature of that reality."*  
(Genovese, 1971: 340)

The equally important point, however, is expressed in the words "*once it arises*" -- it remains a contingent phenomenon. Weberian approaches aside, perhaps the most common position in this category of writers is, that while ethnic phenomena may have lesser or greater degrees of relative autonomy vis à vis the economic base, in the final instance the ethnic process is shaped and determined by economic factors.

One can contrast this assertion with a simpler and more persuasive point made by Horowitz to the effect that ethnic group formation is in fact more powerful than class in its potential for interest articulation and conflict. After pointing out that empirical evidence shows that social identification and polarisation along class lines is relatively weak, Horowitz makes the point that ethnic groups meet the assumptions that Marxists make about the exclusion and inescapability of

class position much better than class does itself, because of the fluidity of class membership under conditions of social mobility (Horowitz, 1985: 90-92).

## 2.2 ADDITIONAL PROPOSITIONS

Each one of these perspectives is persuasive in its own way, although the primordial position has been most frequently criticised, most basically because the assumption of some invariate or "*ineluctable*" identity based on descent cannot be reconciled with the manifest variability of the phenomenon. Many ethnic groups are of mixed origins, and clearly people have passed from one ethnic identity to another, they have manipulated their identities, they have sought all manner of advantages from ethnic belonging and been driven in this regard by many types of needs and motivations, some intrinsic to ethnic identity and others extrinsic to it, and at times they have neglected, suppressed or ignored their ethnic identity and allowed it to become latent. (See, for example, Jack D. Eller and Reed M. Coughlan (1993).)

Certainly, the centre of gravity in most approaches to ethnicity would tend to rule out the "*primordial*" perspective as a major basis for analysis. On the other hand approaches of the constructivist and instrumental type are reconcilable with each other, as possible parallel processes. An ethnic phenomenon might be heavily structured by the circumstances of its social construction and boundary formation and at the same time function as a vehicle for the promotion of extraneous group interests which in turn increase the salience of the boundaries.

But, without accepting the validity of arguments about biological or socially invariate fundamentals of the type proposed by the "*primordialists*", one cannot escape the need to consider the possibility of the content of the commitment having more intrinsic significance; a phenomenon sui generis, accompanying and reinforcing both its structure and boundaries and the material interests which determine its role in a political economy. As suggested already, the fact that ethnic identification and conflict are so ubiquitous, suggests the presence of resonators within the content itself; resonators which might intensify the qualities which give it persistence and a propensity to cause conflict. As Daniel Bell has put it, the ethnic mix "*combining interest with an affective*

"tie" is what gives ethnicity its potency (Daniel Bell, 1975: 152-159). This would mean that one has to be cautious before assuming, as some liberal theorists do, that ethnic commitments can be "*educated out*" of human relationships in situations of inter-cultural, sectarian or inter-racial stress. The exploration may have to go beyond the limits of the established theories reviewed.

Some of the reasons for this additional exploration actually lie in the valuable proposition of the "*instrumentalists*" that ethnicity in itself is a vehicle of "*interest articulation*". Why does the jockey of interests so frequently find that riding the horse of ethnicity enables more forceful progress to be made? Furthermore, one has to ask the additional question of what kind of interests? One accepts without reservation that ethnicity has been ridden in the pursuit of class and power interests, but are these the only interests? The points from Max Weber summarised earlier would incline one to add at least status interests, and if ethnicity is a status and can provide the rewards of social honour, then the jockey and the horse become interchangeable. Interests need not be material -- "*not by bread alone ...*" as it were.

But these suggestions beg all sorts of questions about the specific content and meaning of interests in status and honour. A more substantial consideration of this possibility leads one into what, for want of a better term, one has to call "*psycho-sociology*" and the factor of social needs.

It is this type of motivation in humankind that many authors and thinkers have assumed without attempting to explicate its nature in more detail. Charles Taylor, following Hegel, gives a masterful account of the dilemma of community in the modern state:

*"Thus Hegel's dilemma ... is this: The modern ideology of equality and of total participation leans to a homogenisation of society. This shakes men loose from their traditional communities but cannot replace them as a focus for identity ... the attempt to fill the gap by moving towards a society of universal and total participation ... is vain. It can only aggravate the problem by intensifying homogenisation ... Some of the differences which remain are depreciated, and are breeding grounds for alienation and resentment. Others in fact fill the gap and become foci of identity. These are principally ethnic or national differences ... But nationalism tends to lead to single homogenous states ... but then it is in danger of suppressing dissent and diversity and falling over into narrow and irrational chauvinism."* (Charles Taylor, 1984: 195-196)

Humankind's need for community and the modern dilemma of alienation has been a central theme in both popular and academic social analysis. Ethnicity is not an issue in simple agrarian societies, because its functions in providing community are performed by locality groups, villages and kin networks. They will become ethnic only when they are brought into interaction with other localities and cultural groups. Ethnicity becomes most salient in addressing the dilemma of community in bureaucratic and impersonal modern society in which some extent of multi-culturalism gives it the point of entry to fulfil a need for community, and as we have seen, to perform a variety of other functions for the in-group, some of them benign and others less so.

Benedict Anderson, by implication, states the same problem in a different way (1983). As understood Anderson argues that the collapse of old aristocratic political and religious systems and the "*high centres*" of human identification, as well as the rise of capitalism and the print media encompassing larger economic and political systems, and which reduced the importance of linguistic diversity, led to a situation in which people formed or had to form "*imagined communities*" -- abstract conceptions of the zone of belonging. This set the stage for the development of the modern nation state and its form of affiliation. This affiliation is, however, far removed from community; it is a codified construction, an ideological creation.

Anderson's depiction of the political constitution of the modern industrial or commercial state is useful and accurate, but, as said, by implication it is an admission that the modern rational and secular state cannot fulfil the role of community. It cannot address the needs which the universal presence of "*community*" signify. It is, however, rather too easy and glib to simply accept that there is some powerful and pervasive category of needs. The assessment which follows attempts to specify and understand what these needs are and how they arise.

Here one is not referring to diverse or sporadic expressions of individuals in society but to persistent, consistent and patterned social needs as a factor in ethnicity. One place to start in understanding the needs is Talcott Parsons. Without accepting for one moment the full paradigms of Talcott Parsons in respect of the structure of social action or functionalism, his reference to "*need dispositions*" as a basic regularity in social action illustrates the point (Parsons and Shils, 1951). Parsons saw need dispositions as rooted



in universal personality patterns and as such to have an independent significance -- they are not merely an epiphenomenon derived from and fundamentally shaped by social structure and culture (Parsons, 1970:82).

The utility of Parsons ends here as far as this analysis is concerned, but the possibility of ethnic interests being defined by social needs requires more attention, given in the next section. The arguments which follow are set out in full awareness of the dangers of what is called reductionism in sociological analysis and therefore will be followed by a discussion of precisely the issue of tolerable reductionism.

### 2.2.1 ETHNICITY AS SOCIAL "NEED"

The question, then, is whether or not there is some quite fundamental and substantially irreducible factor associated with ethnicity which, while not "*primordial*", is capable of imparting the "*resonance*" referred to several times in preceding sections. If ethnicity, whatever its class or structural accompaniments, were to be underpinned by a category of social needs, then many questions about its ubiquity and persistence may be closer to being answered.

*"Man is a social animal who needs his own territory, and he needs to belong to a social group in which his identity is not lost."* This quotation by Patricia Elton Mayo (1974:1.) repeats the concept of needs twice in one sentence and as such is useful as an introduction. If people "*need*" to be "*ethnic*", and that need is general and not contingent, then it can be regarded as basic in nature with or without claims of ties of blood. Such propositions can be found in abundance; they assert an intimate connection between individual and the group which implies deep need gratification, but often without teasing out the precise dimensions or content of the group intimacy.

Clifford Geertz himself has referred to the "*desire for recognition*" of identity, hence also suggesting a general social need (1963:108). Geertz refers to "*an unreflective sense of collective selfhood*" and a "*consciousness of kind*". He describes the bonds as

*"ipso facto; the result not merely of affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself." (109)*

Geertz postulates that notwithstanding the fact that the political modernisation process will weaken the local and parochial ties within which group identities reside, the need for people to avoid loss of definition results in a re-crystallisation of identity groups in the changed social structure in the form of ethnic blocs, which enable the individual to preserve the "*consciousness of kind*" (154). This tendency, or for him inevitability, which he describes as "*ineffable and at times having an overpowering coerciveness*", is for Geertz rooted in the non-rational foundations of personality and because of this, is to a relatively significant degree independent of social and political processes. The postulate, therefore, is that certain fundamental regularities will exist in a society, in terms of which people will need to identify themselves with ethnic (or other communal) groups and meanings which will have achieved an enduring character after centuries of crystallisation.

Harold R. Isaacs in his very well-known "*Idols of the Tribe*" (Isaacs:1989), while accepting the primordial position and indeed expressing it very categorically, accepts that political change and varying power relations can change the content of group identity. Therefore, he would accept the notion that there is a variable subjective process of ethnic meaning-creation. Nevertheless, in Isaacs' view, the world over, the "*essential tribalism*" lies not in the content but in the inevitable process of identification, in the course of which the individual achieves a sense of belonging and self-esteem:

*"... in all cases the function of basic group identity has to do most crucially with two key ingredients in every individual's personality and life experience: his sense of belongingness and the quality of his self-esteem ... here he is not alone, which is what all but a very few human beings most fear to be ... Wrapped into his affiliation is the matter of esteem and self-esteem: how individuals are seen by others and how they see themselves." (Isaacs, 1989: 42,43)*

This exposition by Isaacs identifies the "givenness" not as any particular kinship or identity group, but the need to have some kind of intimate group identity. His

notion of primordiality stems from a typical need which social organisation may modify or allow to mutate, but which it will never eradicate. His position on this is not absolutely categorical; he allows for the fact that *"some individuals get sufficient self-esteem out of the stuff of their individual personalities alone"*, but the essential tribalism arises because *"More people have to depend on their group associations to supply what their individual personalities may deny them"* (43). Isaacs predicts that

*"... essential tribalism is so deeply rooted in the condition of existence that it will keep cropping out of whatever is laid over it like trees forcing their way through rocks on mountainsides a mile high."* (Isaacs:1989: 26)

Hence, in his view, notwithstanding modernisation and globalisation of culture, one might expect a permanent fragmentation and re-tribalisation of identities in any society, based on real or imagined descent or locality or any other factor which is assumed to define the character of its members.

The author Geoff Dench puts the same feature of *"belongingness"* in different words:

*"Fraternal groupings provide their members with intrinsic satisfactions, such as conviviality and the assurance of mutual respect ... if we look at the norms by which most people in modern societies actually regulate their everyday lives ... frequent recourse is, in fact, made to values which put satisfactions available through group membership and service, before individual freedom and aspiration."* (Dench. 1986:183)

The closest one can get to what Geertz calls the *"ineffable and coercive"* factor in ethnicity, without assuming some objective force of origin, lies then, in what he refers to as the *"non-rational elements of personality"*. another expression of the needs asserted by Mayo above. The question then is, do human beings, in all sorts of social and cultural conditions, have a reasonably constant personality-based drive to seek self-esteem and emotional security in communal group identification?

This leads us to the question of the place of human nature in sociology and to a somewhat deeper consideration of the issue of identity in human development. In particular one has to consider how variable such tendencies may be in order

to avoid falling into the primordialist trap of assuming some objective and invariable bond between individuals and groups of origin.

It is relatively easy to document the fact that human beings, as a self-conscious species, will always need to find reassurances to protect and bolster self-esteem. Morris Rosenberg (1979:24) makes the telling point that self-concept "*is an important object to everyone, usually the most important object in the world*". The boundaries of the self-concept include "*ego-extensions*", objects outside the actor that lead him or her to feel pride and shame. The ego-extensions lead one quite naturally to the ethnic group as an ego extension, arguably one of the more consistent forms of ego-extension in the world. This notion of ego-extension would be compatible with the concept of the "*generalised other*" of George Herbert Mead (1934/1962). Mead, and many others following him, argued that these external collectivities or "*generalised others*" are more than props for the ego but shape identity in the sense that the self becomes the internalisation of the organised attitudes of the others, as perceived and defined by the ego. In this context ethnic groups would be very specific and bounded interactive perceptions. Hence, ethnic groups as "*generalised others*" may not be the exclusive source of identity formation but where they are, their consequences and functions for the individual would be powerful indeed.

George de Vos and Marcelo Suarez-Orozco (1990) (hereafter referred to as de Vos and Orozco) have devoted at least as much attention to the question of ethnicity in relation to personality development as anyone else. Following Erik Erikson (1963), they use the concept of "*social self-identity*": the attempts which are inevitably made by the individual to

*"... assume, in as integrated a manner as possible, an inner consistency in inhabiting a series of roles in various social relationships ... (which have) particular pertinence to problems of self-acceptance and self-hatred related to minority status."* (de Vos and Orozco, 1990: 32)

They argue that

*"Human beings learn to define themselves by selectively identifying themselves with certain groups and distancing themselves from others ... the individual adult needs the reinforcement of communication with significant others to maintain a sense of a virtuous or justified self ... Any*

*dynamic view taken of societies through history must include how and under what circumstances a self-conscious sense of social belonging arises and is maintained ... "(180).*

It is VITAL to note, however, that social identity is not necessarily ethnic identity; it can be based on a wide variety of different types of social categorisations. As de Vos and Orozco themselves have argued, religious identity can as easily be fitted under the broad description of social belonging as ethnic identity. Hence one might argue that it can be assumed that processes of social identification are universal, but not necessarily confined to the ethnic, or even to other forms of communal identity.

The emphasis, therefore, is on the aspect of identity needs. In the preface to the 1995 volume by Romanucci-Ross and de Vos (1995) (hereafter referred to as Ross and de Vos), Ross and de Vos argue that

*"relative priority must be given to the emotional, even irrational psychological features underlying one's social identity." (12)*

Ross and De Vos observe, for example, that

*"The basic sense of ethnicity is expressively one answer to the human social need to belong through a sense of continuity ." (1990: 224: emphasis added)*

*"Defining oneself in social terms is a basic answer to the human need to belong and to survive ... In its deepest sense, ethnicity is a sense of affiliative survival." (1995: 24)*

This need for continuity is perhaps best served by identification with symbolic objects with the resonance of an actual or imagined or constructed deep history -- ancient cultural or ancestral traditions; hence one arrives at ethnicity. To be certain, a case could be made that an expressive and deeply committed identification with the human race or with peoplehood in general could offer an alternative to ethnicity -- see Geoff Dench below. Progressive cosmopolitan humanist-idealist intellectuals argue this case very frequently. This argument could be bolstered by religiously based views on the unity and inseparability of people.

Humanity at large, however, is very abstract and it does not have the essential functions which the expressive identification with a particular "*people*" would fulfil, namely an opportunity to associate oneself closely with the people on the basis of some special actual, assumed or imagined attribute. Interpreting de Vos and Orozco (1990: 243), one could assert that one "*pull*" which ethnicity has over other objects of identification is what they call "*contrastiveness*". Obviously for an identification to have any potency, it must allow the identity-seeker to feel distinctive or distinguishable. This contrastiveness is particularly necessary when dignity is threatened or pride is at stake:

*"... humans generally exhibit a basic vulnerability to social as well as personal depreciation, belittlement, debasement, degradation, denigration or defamation."* (de Vos and Orozco, 1990: 46)

When such threats to identity are present, and one must admit that they are ubiquitous in all societies, then, as de Vos and Orozco put it,

*"An alternative ... is to resort to a protective and reactive form of ethnic definition as a means of establishing and maintaining a sense of collective dignity."* (220)

Occupational or social status groups could also be argued to have the contrastiveness necessary to satisfy the need for special identity, and in a country like India, for example, they form the basis of ethnicity-like caste systems. But ethnicity has the advantage that it offers additional symbolic content. It offers both the ancestral resonance or historical depth and the contrastiveness. Ethnicity, as a more or less inevitable object of identification in non-homogenous social situations, therefore, appears to win the contest of resonance on points against other possible objects of social identification. It does not knock them out, however.

In line with the discussion above, one can agree with de Vos and Orozco in their adamantness when they say that sociologists should accept

*"... ethnic or cultural identity as a primary social determinant on a par with nationalism and class affiliation in both past and present conflicts within societies."* (1990: 206)

However, as already suggested, the ethnic group does not occupy this space exclusively -- there are ego-extensions of a similar type, such as status

possessions, sporting teams, pride in honour bestowed and sexual prowess, personal popularity, national patriotism and a whole range of other possibilities. One could say that the need for identification is the constant (the equivalent of the "*primordial*" factor) but the human individual and community have choices when it comes to the objects of identification.

As already briefly pointed out in chapter 1, de Vos and Orozco argue that

*"in this primary sense of belonging, an individual can lean towards one of three orientations: a) a present-oriented general concept of citizenship and allegiance to the state or to some more specific occupational definition; b) a more future oriented, transcendent or universalist religious or political definition of the self; or c) some form of past-oriented ethnic identity based on ancestry and origin."* (de Vos and Orozco, 1990: 218)

To put some of these options in more everyday terms, the identity-seeking individual can immerse himself or herself in a search for power, wealth and privilege, in civic consciousness and general patriotism, in religious devotion or humanist causes, or in an ethnic or parochial identity. One knows from common observation in society that these are in fact very real alternatives for people.

One can deal with general patriotism as an alternative to ethnicity very quickly. In a multi-cultural society, ethnicity will have the advantage, already discussed, of greater contrastiveness -- it will have more resonance than a cross-cutting patriotism, despite the occasional "*high*s" offered by warfare or major international sporting events which may give the latter a temporary emotive advantage. The Spanish may cheer for Spain in international soccer or tennis matches, but many return to Catalan or Basque loyalty the next week. The other choices, however, are far more complex.

Why and how are specific choices made between the options outlined above? De Vos and Orozco try to give answers, although, as with much of their treatise it is intertwined with other themes. At various points they refer to the concepts of the relative autonomy of individuals in different cultures, and to possible differences in the degree of "*field independence*" which one finds in different population categories (1990: 240, 249, 236, *passim*). Obviously, cultures, classes or

categories among which there is a high level of individual autonomy and field independence, will be less inclined to seek ethnic attachments than the case in populations in which individuation is not prominent. De Vos at one point calls this

*"contrastive independence. A particular culture can emphasise a particular style of ego development that expects a member to seek individual mastery and to perceive self-control as an internal process ... the individual is to become self-reliant rather than passively dependent on others or on any outside force to address personal needs. Collective security is abjured ... the individual takes the initiative in an instrumental manipulation of the social as well as the material environment."* (1990: 69)

This orientation has been more conventionally described in psychology as an "internal locus of control", or as the opposite of the "other-directed", less-secure tendencies which have also been long discussed in social psychology. De Vos also refers to the

*"... socially expedient (sic) individuals (who) are found not too infrequently in contemporary society. They practice forms of individualistic social mobility at the expense of group ties."* (1990: 236)

Also certain cultures, pre-industrial cultures in particular, but also eastern cultures, are of a type in which tendencies to individuation hardly exist, as opposed to western cultures in which highly individual expression is very frequent. There is an abundance of evidence of this variability in human society.

Hence one might expect the "ethnic-orientation" to be rather weaker in western middle class society, and particularly among highly individuated professionals, managers and intellectuals. Geoff Dench is more explicit and more judgmental. He contrasts the

*"... self-serving transformation of humanism by liberal elites into a philosophy for winners" with communalism and ethnicity as a "philosophy for the weak", the "humble folk -- the losers in the open society."* (Dench, 1986: 180-182)

This is perhaps why many social scientists, as members of liberal elites in the West, have found it so difficult, or threatening, to take ethnicity seriously in their own societies. Both de Vos and Milton Gordon refer to what they call the "liberal expectancy" among social scientists and the intelligentsia, which has



had the consequence that the failure of America's "*melting pot*" ideal of ethnic assimilation took them by surprise (de Vos and Orozco, 1990: 213; Gordon, 1978: 68-70). One must accept that these other levels of identification will compete with ethnicity in industrial societies as sources of ego-defence and psychic investment.

It may be suggested, therefore, that in order to make a case for ethnicity as the dominant ego-extension, one might have to confine the generalisations to the peasant, proletarian and lower-middle classes, in which one is likely to find majorities of people with low personal resources and less self-confidence. This author has found, in an empirical investigation, that self-confidence is very highly correlated with socio-economic status (Schlemmer, 1973).

It would be overstressing this factor, however, to suggest that all confident, autonomous middle class individuals will eschew ethnic commitments. In any pool of self-actualising, "*individuated*" people one will find a proportion who will orientate to their ethnic groups on the basis of a sense of responsibility, particularly if the ethnic group is under stress or disadvantage. It is from these middle-class "*returnees*" that ethnic groups frequently draw their leadership. Furthermore, middle class champions of ethnic causes may very well be motivated by a very universal and democratically endorsed ethical consideration -- the right of cultural minorities to protection, self-expression and recognition of their status. One also has to allow, however, for the possibility that some of the middle class ethnic leadership might in this role perceive opportunities to manipulate ethnic feeling for particular political, economic or social causes, bringing in the instrumental views once again.

Some authors state the case for the need-fulfilling functions of ethnicity so simply and logically that one wonders why so many sociologists have been able to avoid accepting this basis for ethnicity for so long. Horowitz describes the range of needs involved:

*"... the need for familiarity and community, for family-like ties, for emotional support and reciprocal help, and for mediation and dispute resolution -- for all the needs served by kinship but now on a larger canvass ... Common ethnicity enhances the predictability of their*

*behaviour and imposes a set of normative obligations on transactions ... create bonds between bureaucrats and citizens ...*" (Horowitz, 1985: 81).

It is hardly surprising, then, that there are always enough people in any culture, or even any class within it, with the particular needs for ethnic identification discussed above, to make it a sufficiently consistent and pervasive phenomenon in world society to warrant acceptance as a universal and fairly (but not absolutely) inevitable phenomenon.

Milton Gordon sums up the case for ethnicity as a powerful contender for the position of major "*receptacle*" for affiliative needs. As a form of "*peoplehood*" ethnicity, as Gordon puts it:

*"has proved to be hardy. As though with a wily cunning of its own, as though there were some essential element in man's nature that demanded it -- something that compelled him to merge his lonely individual identity in some ancestral group of fellows smaller by far than the whole human race, smaller than the nation -- the sense of ethnic belonging has survived ... twentieth century urban man is closer to his stone age ancestors than he knows."* (Gordon, 1978: 108)

The evidence and argument which has been adduced, in this author's judgement, has certainly established the case for a fundamental factor of considerable resonance in ethnicity. Some people may wish to call it a "*primordial factor*", but this would take it beyond the evidence adduced. A clear case, however, has been made for an alternative "*fundamental*" factor which does not rely on the reality or symbolism of blood and origin. It is therefore possible to avoid the "*baggage*" of crude primordialism and acknowledge the millions of words of convinced criticism of the theory of blood and lineage. The position which seems to emerge, more precisely, is that there is a personality-based need or disposition among many people in most societies and subcultures that offers the option, to find external interactional or symbolic support, reassurance and feedback to bolster self-esteem and self-concepts, and that the prevalence of this need is such as to ensure that ethnic or other communal attachments will be a persisting and ubiquitous phenomenon.

At the same time, however, there is nothing that has been argued above that would discount the possibility that such externalisation of identity needs could

not be provided by powerful shared ideological commitments, some kinds of class solidarities in the workplace, deep immersion in lifestyle pursuits, reassuring interpersonal relations within a family, sexual or marital context, and the like. We may accept the salience and fundamental nature of the needs, but we cannot necessarily accept, on the basis of the nature of such needs, that the inevitability of ethnicity as the particular object or focus of such needs has been demonstrated.

Summing up to this point, what one can argue is that among the deep-seated identity need gratifiers "*on offer*", as it were, ethnic identity may enjoy a persisting advantage, for the following reasons. First, because the symbolism of ethnicity goes to the heart of the universal dilemma of self-esteem -- who am I, where do I come from, and who do I belong to? There are many categories of people in any society who may have the material achievements, the alternative personal resources or the alternative social solidarities to sail above this type of identity reassurance. For the mass of people, particularly those who do not have strong alternative commitments, ethnicity and its cousins, racial and religious identification, are likely to remain powerful attractions as choices for ego-externalisation. Furthermore, leadership and role models for the ethnic "*cause*" are always likely to be available.

The second major advantage of ethnicity, as a choice for the externalisation of ego needs, lies in the "*contrastiveness*" referred to by de Vos et al. Being a matter of culture, values, symbols, languages, accents, lifestyles, or because it may be replete with historical justifications and myths of origin, ethnicity offers the individual in search of ego-expanding associations much more than class ideologies or identification with some fallible political leader or faction.

But, before closing the case in respect of the rootsprings of ethnic identification, one has to consider what the opponents of propositions such as those made above would say. Up to this point the "*constructivist*" and "*instrumental*" viewpoints have only been briefly outlined, and it is necessary to review the basis of these propositions in more detail and to assess their implications for the

propositions made about ethnic identification as a source of social need gratification.

### 2.2.2 A CAUTIONARY COMMENT: SOCIETY AS SOCIAL FACTS. THE DANGER OF REDUCTIONISM AND OF OVERLOOKING HIDDEN RELATIONSHIPS

Any approach based on needs, need dispositions or other aspects of social psychology is not always compatible with typical approaches in sociological analysis. Many, if not most sociologists tend to approach social phenomena as processes or structures with regularities which impose themselves on individuals rather than as the outcomes of regularities which exist within the typical individual personality. Many sociologists would regard the foregoing section on social needs as somewhat of a sociological heresy.

The danger of "*reductionism*" is usually seen to lie in attempting to explain propositions in one science in terms of the propositions applicable to another science. Another danger which would be identified would be that of accepting the phenomenon of ethnicity at face value and being lured by the gratifications and sentiments associated with ethnic commitment into overlooking less-obvious but more salient relationships between ethnicity and other aspects of social structure. In this framework the approach of seeking explanations at the level of needs and motivations could be depicted as a celebration of some type of "*false consciousness*", as Hanf, quoted earlier, has pointed out. Worse, the this criticism might even extend further to suggest that an approach, based on the assumption of social needs, could be giving undue legitimacy or cogency to conservative or anti-progressive views on the salience of ethnicity.

In discussing the needs-based perspective, this author has tried to avoid drawing on social scientists whose views on ethnicity are part of their espousal of "*traditional*" values or socially conservative ideologies. By the same token, this author has also not drawn on another equally ideological category of social scientists, whose major preoccupation is to strip away all processes which complicate a revolutionary class-based analysis of society.

There are, however, analyses without a focused ideological "*agenda*" which pose fundamental questions for any "*primordial*" hypothesis or for propositions about ethnicity based on patterned social needs. It is necessary to review some of these kinds of analyses by way of illustration.

The most basic criticism of a primordial position, or one based on psychological variables or personality needs, would be the argument that sociology and political sociology should be based on "*social facts*", and that bringing in the psychological factors like emotional needs or need dispositions, robs social analysis of its most meaningful content. There have been periods within schools of sociology when the accusation of such "*reductionism*" would have been enough to discredit an analysis without any further effort.

Georg Simmel (1917/1950) argued for a pure sociology which would study patterns of social interaction as the most basic facts. Emile Durkheim, in his Rules of Sociological Method (1895/1938), was even more prominent in arguing that the proper subject matter of sociology is social facts -- values, customs, laws, currents of thought, social institutions and other regularities of behaviour derived from a level of social as opposed to psychological action. These social elements exist at a level different to that of individual motivation and need, and exercise a shaping influence or coercive restraint on the individual irrespective of personality characteristics. Social reality is here seen as a reality sui generis and is irreducible to individual agency and hence to psychology.

One possible argument within this broad tradition in the social sciences would be that ethnicity cannot be explained other than in terms of its own dynamic; that it has to be explained as a phenomenon which is intrinsically specific (in other words, it reproduces itself through its own mechanisms and not through extraneous motivations of participating members). This view of ethnicity would be that like any other form of social structure, it is interactional or derived from patterns of interest or from the logic of the processes which shape its existence. Therefore it would not be inevitable in society: alternative structural arrangements or processes could displace it or make it redundant. In other

words, ethnicity would have to achieve the regularity of occurrence and interactional logic of say, the family, or kinship, or interest-based organisation to impress this type of sociologist that it is a ubiquitous structure or pattern of society.

More frequently, however, the argument would be made that a reductionist approach sacrifices the great strength and contribution of structural analysis, namely that by focusing on relations between elements of structure, or between interacting structures, the analyst is able to "*detect*", identify or uncover a deeper dynamic or pattern of causality which is not directly observable. The major example is Marxist analysis. While this approach can produce and has produced absurd propositions akin to a typical conspiracy theory, there can be no doubt that powerful interests in a society can, through very opaque processes of selecting and promoting certain responses, secure outcomes advantageous to themselves. For sociologists of this viewpoint, to argue that ethnicity is derived from regularities in the social needs and personality systems of individuals would be to ignore that such needs are shaped, inadvertently or through the manipulation of culture and social forces, by concentrations of economic and political interests.

The arguments for structural analysis and against reductionism, however, should not be carried too far, and a number of streams of sociology and political science have found that the elements of individual agency, or patterned needs, have to be incorporated. The propositions of Parsons and Shils about need-dispositions have already been noted (Parsons and Shils, 1962), but there are many more persuasive arguments in subsequent literature. There have been many schools of theorists; theorists of the "*middle range*", the Symbolic Interactionists, the Exchange Theorists, the Social Phenomenologists, the Hermeneutic viewpoints and others, a vast weight of thought which has sought to "*bring men back in*", to quote George Homans (1964). The *Collins Dictionary of Sociology* takes a wisely cautious position, saying that:

*"The debate over (individual) agency and structure in sociology can be seen as fundamental to the discipline and unlikely ever to be resolved. ... It is clear that conceptions of structuralism ... must be acknowledged as a raising of central questions in sociological analysis that have been*

*useful in combating a one-sided individualism. ... Equally however, structuralism is often seen as itself unjustifiably one-sided even by some of its own previous leading proponents." (Jary and Jary, 1991: 634-5)*

The structural approach, however, is a useful source of caution in respect of the danger of over-emphasising the independent force of typical social needs. The sociological tradition of respect for "*social facts*" must incline one to seek a balance or reconciliation between the psychologically and sociologically-based perspectives. A excellent guide to such a reconciliation is to be found in the contribution by Berger and Luckmann in their work "*The Social Construction of Reality*" (1967). Another key work in this tradition is that of Anthony Giddens (1984), but for present purposes the perspective by Berger and Luckmann will suffice.

Berger and Luckmann put relevant parts of their argument together as follows:

*"... society is a human world, made by men, inhabited by men, and, in turn, making men in an ongoing historical process. (p211) ... man produces reality and thereby produces himself." (p204)*

Berger and Luckmann therefore do not see the psychological level as an immutable level of reality, akin to their examples of biological constraints on social patterns outlined elsewhere in their text. They are explicit in warning that psychological theories must be "*adequate*" in terms of the social context and reality in which the phenomenon becomes manifest. Hence they would argue that the ego-extension needs and needs for identity- reassurance discussed in the previous section are shaped by the type of society in which they appear:

*"The specific contents that are internalised in primary socialisation vary, of course, from society to society." (p155) Hence: "Identity is formed by social processes ... determined by the social structure."*

(It might be possible for a collectivity of berry-eating recluses to develop completely different types of needs for identity and reassurance than those outlined in the previous section.)

They continue:

*"Conversely, the identities produced by the interplay of organism, individual consciousness and social structure react upon the given social*

*structure, maintaining it modifying it and even reshaping it." (p155)*  
Hence: *"Identity is a phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between the individual and society. Identity types, on the other hand, are ... relatively stable elements of objective social reality." (p156)*

In drawing out the implications of this "*dialectical*" proposition for ethnicity one might say the following. In most of human society, people are socialised within families and the families are located in local communities with characteristics of language, habits, bonds of integration and interdependency and the like. Most children in society develop identities not like those that may be developed by berry-eating recluses, but identities in interaction with significant others up to the level of communities. This locality-relatedness and the awareness of linguistic and cultural similarities and differences between communities is a typical part of socialisation. This social space attunes identity formation to the possibility of identification with some and not others in the same society. Hence a basis of identity internalisation is formed which can elaborate into ethnicity. Once this occurs, the structures of the ethnic interactions will reinforce, and be reinforced and maintained, by the identity formation. If there are factors in wider social interaction in the society which induce stress or difficulties of adjustment or injuries to identity of any kind, the possibility will be great that the externalisation of identity will seek the comfort and the reassurance of the closest grouping of significant others -- the kin network, the village or in modern multicultural society the ethnic in-group.

Where a society is so organised that there are no significant social differences between localities and communities to be internalised in the identity-forming process, then ethnicity will be less likely. The identity forming process and the needs for identification with significant others, even if intensified by difficulties in adjusting to the wider interaction, will find and take different forms. Hence there is a logic in the views of cosmopolitan humanists that schools should be desegregated and multi-cultural, that neighbourhoods should be integrated and that as much contact and familiarity across society as possible should be engineered. There was also a logic in the views of some of the early Communist revolutionaries that family systems and religious practices should be dismantled



and replaced by bureaucratically run collectives of various types, in order to reduce the weight of conservatism in community life.

But it is highly implausible in any modern multi-cultural society that all forms of closer identification with in-groups can be effectively discouraged or eliminated. The sheer and simple forces of lifestyle, language and proximity are sufficient to create, not the final ethnic product, but the conditions within which it can develop. Social needs for affinity and self-reflection, particularly if aggravated by social stresses, will do the rest.

From another perspective, Milton Gordon gives an overview of the debate on the place of individual psychological needs in his work on *Human Nature, Class and Ethnicity* (Gordon, 1978: chapter 1). Following Alex Inkeles, he makes the very vital point that the introduction of personality or psychological variables, but within a sociological context, is essential in order to reduce the amount of unexplained variance in typical structural analyses of social processes. He argues that:

*"...very little sociological analysis is done without using at least an implicit psychological theory. It seems evident that in making this theory explicit and bringing psychological data to bear systematically on sociological problems we cannot fail but improve the scope and adequacy of sociological analyses."* (Gordon, 1978: 32)

How does this type of analysis relate to the "*constructivist*" and "*instrumental*" theories of ethnicity. There is no problem in reconciling this kind of view with that of the constructivists; the conditions for the emergence of ethnicity having been established, the boundary-forming and rationalising processes posited by the constructivists take the phenomenon further, formalising and entrenching its structures and rules of association. In fact, it is exactly what Berger and Luckmann would postulate when they argue that the dialectic of interaction between the individual and society is socially constructed.

The problem arises in trying to reconcile this kind of approach with that of those "*instrumentalists*" who would argue that the ethnic phenomenon is engineered or secured in ways difficult to observe by major interests, in support of their

relative advantage in society (see earlier outline of this position). Berger and Luckmann allow for this when they say that psychological theories may be

*"concocted 'before the fact' so to speak. Their subsequent social establishment and concomitant reality-generating potency may be brought about by any number of affinities between theorising personnel and various social interests. Deliberate ideological manipulation by politically interested groups is one historical possibility."* (p200)

The theorising personnel would be the ideologists and agents of the interests lurking in the cultural superstructure.

Berger and Luckmann, however, see this as a possibility, and not as the inevitable or typical process. While this author also accepts the instrumental process as a possibility, for it to be the typical process would mean that the interests would have to gain access, in an effective and ongoing basis, to community life and family life and to meticulously orchestrate the responses of communities to their social environment. It would mean that power elites or capitalist agents, without attracting the attention of the media, would be making sure that, say, Quebecois schools, churches, local community structures and all sorts of popular cultural activity are following an agenda to create and recreate an ethnic consciousness. This author is convinced that some of these interests attempt this kind of manipulation, but how could such attempts conceivably be as efficient as to secure widespread ethnic consciousness and solidarity. If ethnic manipulation is so efficient why have at least equally vigorous attempts by the US Federal Government in certain periods to counter race prejudice been less-effective?

The more plausible and probable explanation in cases where ethnicity coincides with interests is that the "*base*" process of ethnic group formation occurs largely independently of any manipulation by interests groups, but once established, it may be encouraged or reinforced by agents of the interests, frequently inadvertently. If the ethnic phenomena secure material and power advantages for adherents, then the process will be self-reinforcing, and often very powerfully so.

Most mature analysts who would endorse the "*instrumental*" school do not need to assume that ethnicity is created by mysterious and covert processes of manipulation. In any event, "*Ockham's razor*" -- the recognised principle of "*parsimony*" in theory seems appropriate here: why seek elaborate and obscure explanations if more plausible and simpler explanations will do the job?

The discussion of the approaches above which reconcile the structural and individualistic levels of explanation confirm the salience of individual agency, motivation and needs arising from the situation of individuals. They warn against equating the needs with the assumptions of primordiality, however, because the case is compelling that the needs adduced are not absolutes or invariable objective realities with the status of biological characteristics. They are socially variable, both in flavour and in strength. They shape structure but are shaped by structure and the social conditions of the communities in which the needs develop.

If such needs for community and identity are fairly similar across modern world society, it is because the institutions of the family, of residential arrangements, of networks and localities are basically fairly similar. They are also not inevitable, because the way in which a local or group or status-group culture develops can produce alternative avenues for the gratification of such needs. The modern middle classes in post-industrial society have indeed produced a powerful alternative, rooted in the cultural convergence accompanying globalisation. The rich life-styles and the recreational and occupational gratifications of the "*cosmopolitan*" classes make the need for particularistic identification redundant.

Yet where they are salient, these needs, while in no way "*primordial*", have qualities akin to those generated by primordiality. They have the quality of "*ineluctability*", which is the quality which Shils reserved for the primordial motivations behind ethnicity. Primordiality -- no; but ineluctability under certain common social conditions -- yes.

The preceding sections have attempted to review most of the major viewpoints on ethnicity contained in the literature. Not all signal contributors can be covered within the space limits of this dissertation, but the author would be disappointed to find out that a major perspective has been omitted.

Before attempting to reconcile the various strands of theory as a basis for propositions to guide this analysis, it is necessary to look specifically at the literature on ethnic mobilisation and conflict, as a further basis for understanding why ethnic processes might intensify, persist or decline as a consequence of their intrinsic dynamics or under the impact of extraneous social forces. This follows in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PROPOSITIONS ABOUT ETHNIC MOBILISATION AND ACTION AND THEIR OPPOSITES**

It is impossible in this review to avoid some overlap with the material covered in chapter 2. Some additional references to the nature of the ethnic phenomenon will appear, but as far as possible in a somewhat different context of assessment.

As already suggested in chapters 1 and 2, the field of writing on ethnic or communal mobilisation, action and conflict has contributed a great deal to the body of wisdom about ethnic strife. But at the same time, some of the very authors whose contributions have been greatest have admitted that the level of precision of the knowledge seldom allows confident predictions of conflict or action. This section will review the contributions as a further background to focussing the conceptual approach on the questions of ethnic action, persistence and decline in the South African case study.

#### **3.1 THE BALANCE OF FORCES: ETHNIC ACTION AS A STRATEGIC OUTCOME**

Perhaps the most plausible or convincing propositions are based on the assumption that ethnic action, like any form of dissent in society, is based on the strength of motivations in relation to the constraints and opportunities. Systematic propositions around the issue of ethnic mobilisation or its absence along these lines are a well-established approach.

Some thirty years ago, Blalock (1967: ch. 5) for example, outlined a systematic approach of potential utility based essentially on a calculus of power, within what was basically a conflict paradigm. Although his propositions sound like truisms, they are the type of basic and in a sense common-sense dynamic often overlooked in current explanations of ethnic conflict. For example, he proposed that minority mobilisation

would be low if there is either a low perceived probability of reducing the discrimination against the minority or a high probability of extreme and punitive sanctions. Further, minority mobilisation is likely to be greatest where the group is intermediate in relative size, being neither too small to exert any meaningful influence nor so large as to constitute a major power threat, and as a consequence invoking powerful and early counter-reactions from the dominant majority. Given a minority of intermediate size, the probability of mobilisation is increased by the presence of a potential coalition partner not sufficiently powerful to mobilise successfully on its own. If dominant group mobilisation is increased as a result of the minority mobilisation, it will lead either to a reduction in minority reaction or, if the minority perceives the prospect of success, to an increase in the intensity of minority mobilisation leading to overt conflict. Blalock states the qualification, however, that the effectiveness of dominant group sanctions depends on the level of discrimination. If the latter is felt very intensely, the sanctions will lose their strength as a deterrent.

These propositions are logical strategic considerations; as suggested they boil down to a type of power-instrumentality. Self-evident though they may be, one would be foolish indeed not to incorporate such propositions as very basic considerations in a hypothetical framework relating to ethnic mobilisation and action. The dynamics implied by Blalock's propositions may be too blunt to have great explanatory precision, however, and obviously one should allow for the effects of many coincidental or intervening factors which would reduce or augment the strength of any set of strategic calculations by an ethnic collectivity.

An analysis in a similar kind of framework -- one which is essentially strategic or "*instrumental*" -- is presented by Donald Horowitz (1985: ch. 6), specifically around the question of ethnic separatism and secession. Suffice it to say that Horowitz looks at ethnic secession as the outcome of a type of strategic weighing of grievances, demands and constraints; prominent among the latter being the economic costs of secession. Elsewhere in the work, however, Horowitz demonstrates that he is abundantly aware that very complex intervening and conditioning variables are present in all ethnic interaction and that strategic or instrumental perceptions can be augmented or weakened by more complex factors in the consciousness of the actors.

A very noteworthy recent attempt to increase the precision of analyses of ethnic dissent is that of Gurr. Ted Gurr has followed up his famous work, *Why Men Rebel* (1970), with an analysis focused on minorities (Gurr 1993); a very comprehensive review of statistical evidence relating to 227 ethnic minorities and their responses to their situations during the eighties.

Gurr's findings show that the

*"consistently strongest determination of magnitudes of communal protest and rebellion in the 1980s is the group's prior mobilisation for political action ... mobilisation for non-violent protest at the end of the 1970s predicts 33,4 per cent of the magnitude of protest ... (and prior) mobilisation for rebellion predicts 45,5 per cent of the 1980's magnitude of rebellion ..."* (p188).

As Gurr points out, these results point to the power of a self-sustaining conflict dynamic. Gurr is obviously aware, however, that the more interesting question is why groups mobilise in the first place, and the interrelationships in his data provide some not unexpected answers.

Gurr concludes:

*"Economic disadvantages, especially those associated with discrimination and poverty, are consistently correlated with economic and social grievances and with demands for greater political rights. They also were weakly but consistently correlated with magnitudes of communal protest. Resentments about restricted access to political positions and a collective history of lost autonomy drive separatist demands and rebellion generally ... grievances (and the objective conditions to which they are a response) are critical in the early stages of group mobilisation, but become less significant than group organisation, leadership and state response once campaigns or organised political action are underway."* (188-189)

This is Gurr's resolution of the deprivation and mobilisation theories of civil conflict.

Among the important early factors in the development of an activist ethnic consciousness is the loss of benefits or status, and here Gurr reinforces the propositions of other authors like Rothschild (1981) and Esman (1990). It is often noted that shifts or changes in relative status or rewards are accompanied by greater awareness of the benefits they can bestow.

Of particular interest is Gurr's assessment of the effects of the surrounding political system. In institutionalised democracies, he observes, the trend is for dissent to take the form of organised communal protest, whereas communal rebellion prevails in non-democratic states. In some democratising states, the presence of communal challenges shifts the system towards autocracy. Gurr concludes that

*"the process of democratisation provides opportunities that spur the mobilisation of communal groups for both protest and rebellion ... In powerful states the balance of opportunities and risks favour communal protest over rebellion ... In states that most rapidly expanded their powers ... rebellion was intensified and protest diminished ... the process of 'state-building' has had inimical effects on many communal groups, especially those on the social and geographic margins."* (Gurr, 1993: 189-190)

Renee de Nevers also considers the wider political context and in the process has made a useful attempt to systematise the effects of patterns of power and the nature of its expression on the likelihood of ethnic conflict, by looking specifically at what can occur in democratising states to reduce or exacerbate ethnic conflict (de Nevers, Renee (1993: 31-48).

De Nevers also assumes that ethnic groups with an established identity in a multi-ethnic society are more or less automatically predisposed to defend their ethnic interests under certain conditions, and this is discussed in the next section. After exploring the varieties of forms of response to ethnicity the author concludes that there are conditions in an emerging democracy which can reduce or eliminate the potential for conflict, particularly since the democratising process itself encourages a temporary "*submergence*" of ethnic commitments. But it is a submergence, not an elimination of the potential for ethnic action. The ethnic factor is assumed to be always at least potentially present as a basis of reaction if ethnic relations are mismanaged in the new democracy.

Drawing from various parts of de Nevers' analysis allows the following summary to be made of the major factors which, in her view, will encourage ethnic conflict or hostile reactions from ethnic collectivities under conditions of democratisation (de Nevers' propositions are not in the original order and are summarised and paraphrased):

- a history of ethnic grievances;



- the impossibility or perceived impossibility of an ethnic group addressing those grievances through legal or political channels;
- intolerance or absence of moderation among ethnic leaders;
- the previous government having been a non-democratic minority regime;
- previous authoritarian manipulation of the ethnic distributions in the society;
- solidary or mono-ethnic opposition to the old regime, as opposed to inter-ethnic co-operation in opposing the old regime;
- perceptions among political leaders of advantage in perpetuating ethnic hostilities;
- uneven sizes of ethnic groups in the new society;
- the presence of ethnic allies in influential positions in neighbouring states;
- the military (or, it can be added, the state bureaucracy) becoming dominantly composed of one ethnic group or certain ethnic groups to the disadvantage of others, as opposed to a composition which is heterogeneous and unable to be stereotyped;
- the ignoring or underestimation of the ethnic factor in negotiations for the establishment of the new democracy; and,
- a political and constitutional system which does not, through devolution or other constitutional devices, create a reasonable balance between the power enjoyed by different ethnic groups in the society.

It is difficult to question any of these propositions, because they have a face validity in the light of the numerous historical and contemporary examples to which de Nevers refers. The only part of this analysis which could be open to challenge is the assumption, mentioned earlier, that ethnic groups will inevitably behave as collectivities in response to their political situation. For the rest, de Nevers' exposition seems to boil down to sound, practical principles of ethnic conflict management in divided societies, the absence of which is likely to produce the kind of reactions which are so typical in situations of rapid change, as in the former Yugoslavia, Soviet Union and perhaps South Africa.

De Vos (1995: ch 1) sets out a variety of circumstances under which the ethnic identity will not become activated for action in a situation of cultural pluralism. They include

the internalisation by groups suffering discrimination of the negative images which others have of them, leading to demoralisation and even to social pathologies, a reaction in which an ethnic group may retreat from any social challenge and become less visible, concentrating on achieving material self-reliance. Alternatively stated, this is a strategic compliance with wider societal norms while the group develops capacities to compete, and a denial of ethnic identity in order to more readily assimilate into the wider community or achieve individual status advancement. This ties in with Horowitz point that the cement is stronger in ranked systems.

The paradigms of Gurr and de Nevers can be accepted as broadly applicable to mobilised ethnicity for itself (to borrow from the well-known distinction made for class consciousness between class "*in itself*" and class "*for itself*"). a prior analysis may be required to assess to what extent a nominal ethnic category has become a self-defined category of interest and status, competing as such, in the wider community. This prior analysis will presumably be the "*fine grain*" to which Gurr refers as necessary in the analysis of ethnic mobilisation (Gurr, 1993: 189).

Gurr emphasises balance of opportunity and constraint up to overt suppression. Given, however, that ethnic commitments can be covert, and if the ethnic commitment has become established as the basis of the gratification of identity needs, no amount of coercion will eradicate it completely, as already suggested above, unless alternative opportunities for identity and status gratification exist. The alternatives, if rewarded, are likely to gain ascendancy over negatively sanctioned ethnic commitments.

Many of the propositions and findings discussed thus far tend to correspond broadly with the earlier propositions of Blalock. As such they present ethnic action as a response to deprivation and relative deprivation at basis, but thereafter the direction, mode and intensity of the action is determined by the framework of strategic opportunities, constraints and ameliorating forces within the power arena.

These examples of predictive paradigms all reflect the very broadest of dynamics. What they are saying in effect is that ethnic groups will develop conceptions of their interests, and on that basis are likely to compete within economic and political systems. If invidiously ranked or discriminated against within labour markets or in social ranking

systems as a whole, and if the discrimination is perceived as deprivation relative to what they feel they are entitled to receive, which occurs particularly when groups have lost autonomy, status or resources, they will be predisposed to act in defence of communal interests. If furthermore, they perceive opportunities for success in altering their situation, they may actively dissent or rebel. Such action is most likely where the group has already been mobilised for protest or active dissent, and has a history of such action. It is also more likely at intermediate levels of political opportunity -- those between extreme repression and the full access and incorporation of minorities in successful pluralist democracies.

Williams (1994: 73) lists the critical elements:

1. Strong ethnic identities and boundaries
2. Grievances
3. Opportunity structures relative to ethnic group resources
4. Resource mobilisation.

He emphasises that these factors have to be attended to simultaneously in attempting to explain or predict minority dissent.

This kind of summing up has a persuasive common-sense logic to it, and considerable empirical support, but nevertheless the predictive power of such propositions is generally not strong. The regression coefficients quoted by Gurr illustrate this weakness. The lack of predictive precision is usually due to the presence of variations within the causal factors and the presence of intervening factors which can nullify, alter, weaken or strengthen the cause and effect relationships. Gurr himself refers to the need to follow up his general propositions and interrelationships with more detailed ("*fine-grained*") analyses in order to increase the depth and the precision of the propositions (Gurr, 1993: 189).

R.A. Schermerhorn (1970: ch1) describes how his repeated and unsuccessful attempts to apply the categories of "*power-conflict*" analysis to ethnic action throughout world history eventually drove him to accept that a less mechanical and more dialectical view was necessary to explain both the presence and absence of ethnic dissent. He refers to Max Gluckman in pointing out that conflict between groups of unequal power in societies can "*engender integrative bonds*" that have "*system*" characteristics, and which

can include surprising degrees of mutuality and reciprocity amidst the stress of inter-group competition, conflict and even oppression. Hence the "*conflict*" can always gradually acquire the characteristics of a self-sustaining equilibrium, albeit invidious in objective terms for one or more of the groups involved.

One obviously has to qualify the notion of ethnic conflict as some kind of discrimination-driven war-game with reference to more complex perspectives from systems theory in general and from social psychological theory. Respect for this complexity immediately leaves room for an examination of the particular features of ethnic identity, because in the process of identity formation or its change over time, one may discover a greater or lesser propensity for ethnic dissent or aggressive mobilisation.

Gurr, for example, might have been able to isolate the general factors in the situation which are most significant, but they do not consistently have the effects which his regression equations point to. One group with a sense of deprivation may rebel, but another group with an equal sense of deprivation may attempt to deny or play down the ethnic identity in order to try to escape the discrimination. One will have to attempt to assess the extent to which the escape routes for a group are denied, but also differentiate between nuances in the characteristics of ethnic consciousness within Gurr's broader categories in order to achieve greater precision. The importance of the actors' own definitions and self-definitions, which Gurr's analysis could not incorporate, are critically related to the type of action one has in mind. Individuals and indeed even collectivities have to make complex connections between their circumstances or status and their ethnic identity, and the nature of the perceived connection will influence their collective strategies.

Mason points out the dilemma:

*"Ethnic divisions ... are rather common features among the members of the contemporary nation state system, and ethnic groups typically co-exist in some structural arrangement characterised by differential distribution of societal benefits on the basis of ethnicity. If such discrimination were sufficient to induce ethnic conflict, then such conflict would be far more pervasive and persistent than it is the fact. Indeed, what is striking is the relative rarity of ethnic collective action in a global system in which ethnic stratification is anything but rare."* (Mason, 1992: 579)

Part of the indeterminate nature of the ethnic dynamic is the critical role of ethnic intellectuals who are "... *articulate and ambitious and at the same time occupied with a search for identity*" (Williams, 1994: 66), and the effectiveness of intellectuals does not necessarily co-vary with the factors predisposing groups to dissent. Another part of the indeterminacy lies in complex interactions between ethnic mobilisation, modes of dissent and the level of socio-economic development in a country or a region. Horowitz (1985:258), observes from his inventory of cases of conflict that secessionist movements tend to be early and frequent for less-developed groups in less-developed regions, and both rare and late among socio-economically advanced groups in advanced regions, with permutations of these factors in between. Possibly the "*status*" and credibility of the surrounding political economy is an important factor.

### 3.2 CONFLICT AS INTRINSIC TO ETHNIC PHENOMENA

#### 3.2.1 ETHNICITY AS A VEHICLE FOR EXTRANEIOUS INTEREST-COMPETITION

Some propositions of general utility in understanding propensities for ethnic dissent can be derived from theories of ethnic conflict which reduce the field of complexity by focusing on key interests which are hypothesised to lie at the core of ethnic interaction, and would by extension see ethnic dissent as a phenomenon akin to class action, and as such inherently competitive. For example there is the analysis so-called "*split labour markets*" and the inter-group hostilities which are generated (Bonacich, 1972: 547-559). Another useful perspective, and one referred to in the previous chapter is offered by Hechter (1975) and others, namely that of "*internal colonialism*". Similar to this perspective is the long-standing analysis made by South African Communist Party anti-apartheid activists of what they termed "*colonialism of a special type*", in their attempts to integrate the class, racial and ethnic dimensions of minority domination in the old South Africa (No Sizwe, 1979). These contributions, however, assume that because the ethnic phenomenon has an interest base of a class type or of a type associated with the striving for liberation from colonial domination, the likelihood of mobilised action can be expected.

This begs the question of why some victims of class or colonial domination will act and others will remain quiescent for long periods.

### 3.2.2 ETHNIC STATUS AS INTRINSICALLY COMPETITIVE

There are various contributions which depart from the view that ethnicity, as an interest in itself, has a type of in-built propensity to result in mobilisation. Hannan (1979) and Olzak (1992), for example, propose or imply a basic propensity for inter-ethnic competition in society. Renee de Nevers (1993) argues "... *Thus, the potential for ethnic conflict is almost universal ...*" (p32). This assumption is so strongly held that the author poses the question of whether ethnic conflict is not an "*inevitable*" consequence of the disintegration of authoritarian controls in a democratising society. Ethnic groups are assumed to respond like interest groups and classes, but with the rewards being based on status and prestige rather than material benefits -- Weber's (1922/1968/1980) basic view, as suggested in the previous chapter. The implication would be that there is constant and universal competitiveness between ethnic categories seeking to maximise opportunities for status enhancement, or alternatively seeking to protect status positions. The studies in question have explored how processes of modernisation, urbanisation, nation-building and the expansion of the bureaucratic state can alter or intensify the conditions of inter-ethnic competition, and as such precipitate conflict and dissent. Of particular interest has been the evidence that processes can occur which break down existing barriers to contact between groups and in so doing create conflict when prior "*boundary*" mechanisms lose their effectiveness -- ethnic responses surge at the very time when the political and social systems are expected to achieve integration and assimilation. As the assessment of Weber's views in the previous chapter would suggest, however, ethnic status interests may also become less and less relevant in the modern bureaucratic state, and many ethnic groups have become assimilated into larger national identities, or into supra-national class loyalties.

The broader context of this problematic is the process of political modernisation of states:

*"All modern nation-states seem to go through a process of attempting to forge a set of beliefs that serve as their cornerstone ... The search for underlying identities, for shared commitments to the same set of symbols, no doubt will continue to be the most challenging feature of nation-building and one to arouse ancient rivalries within new and old nations."* (Orum 1983:288-289)

The once confident assumptions that traditional "*particularisms*" would be eroded by "*universal*" values and loyalties in the processes of political modernisation have proven to be extremely problematic, not only as processes but within the content of the over-arching values of nation-building themselves (see chapter 2, and the arguments of Geoff Dench in particular). Here again, however, overarching nation-building works in some situations and arouses resistance from ethnic groups in others, and the question is why this variability should exist.

Horowitz (1985: part II), in his exploration of what has been termed the theory of "*relative group worth*", adds the depth of the Weberian perspective on status as a general reward system to this kind of perspective on inter-ethnic competition within the nation state. Against the background of such assumptions, the potential for protest, dissent and rebellion can in a sense be roughly predicted on the basis of social, political and economic changes which alter or threaten established concepts which group members have of their relative position in society.

Horowitz also makes observations about the variability in the salience of ethnicity between Western and less-developed societies which shed light on Weber's assumption that the modern, rational nation state would erode ethnicity. He makes the point, supported by empirical references, that the intensity of ethnic conflict is lower in the West than it is in Third World states. This he ascribes to the fact that the over-arching national identities in the West have relatively great salience, to the presence of compelling alternative commitments and generally to cross-cutting affiliations which prevent ethnicity from displacing other forms of identification in civil society. As a consequence perhaps, even ethnic parties tend to reach out beyond ethnic issues (Horowitz, 1985: 18-21).

These observations lend some credence to the Weberian expectation that ethnicity would be eroded in modernised political systems, but the evidence is that it has not occurred to the extent that Weber expected. The core principles of ethnic affiliation have survived the modern era almost everywhere. What is useful from the perspective of this dissertation, however, is that the modes of governance and civic organisation in the society are important variables bearing upon the strength of ethnic attachments.

There is compelling evidence of the validity or partial validity of all the perspectives discussed above, but they do not necessarily offer predictive precision as far as the strength of ethnic mobilisation is concerned. The fact that boundary maintenance has weakened or that ethnic status is threatened does not necessarily lead to conflict. Within the predisposing factors one has to look for patterns of interaction which increase the likelihood of mobilised dissent.

### 3.2.3 ETHNIC CONFLICT IN RANKED AND UNRANKED SYSTEMS

In chapter 1, one of the definitions of ethnicity noted distinguished between ranked and unranked ethnicity. The analysis of Horowitz identifies its importance in respect of modalities in the potential for ethnic conflict in society. Horowitz argues that in ranked systems, there is often a more or less explicit "*premise of inequality*" with an associated degree of consensus or acceptance by the subordinate status groups of their inferior social position, strengthened by reciprocity and clientelism. All this leads to greater predictability in inter-ethnic relations in stable ranked systems. By contrast, unranked systems are less predictable: "*As there is less generalised domination, so there is also less generalized collaboration.*" (Horowitz, 1985: 28)

In situations in which the stability of the system is threatened, ethnic conflict tends to take different forms in ranked and unranked ethnic interaction. Horowitz points out that because class and ethnic status tend to coincide in ranked systems, ethnic dissent tends to be in the direction of social revolution or transformation. In unranked systems, the ethnic groups behave like incipient



nations, and will act strategically in pursuit of objectives, which are usually to secure rights to separation or autonomy rather than to overthrow the existing system (p30-31). Horowitz also makes the useful point that in unranked systems, because class and ethnic status cut across each other, there is a tendency for class issues to be avoided. Hence the politics of ethnic conflict in ranked systems tends to be radical, whereas that in unranked systems tends to be conservative (Horowitz, 1985:32).

### 3.3 THE FACTOR OF EMOTIVE INTENSITY OR "MAGNIFYERS" AS FACTORS IN CONFLICT

Among the alternative sources of social identity, ethnic identity may have a particularly compelling quality. Some definitions of ethnicity and nationalism assume that a propensity for conflict is built into the very nature of the identity. George Brock has been quoted by Pfabigan (1991: 54) as defining the phenomenon as:

*"... a people united by a common dislike of its neighbours and a common mistake about its origin."*

Many others, however, would insist that ethnic identity and even ethnic mobilisation do not necessarily imply ethnic conflict.

The study of Arend Lijphart, which demonstrated, in the very cradle of class theory and ideological mobilisation, Europe, that ethnic and religious interests have weighed more heavily in the outcome of elections than class interests, is very telling (Lijphart, 1979, 1980). Lijphart found in a "crucial" experiment in four societies in which class divisions, ethnic identities and religious cleavages existed, that a multivariate statistical "tree" analysis showed religion to have the strongest influence on voting, followed by language, with class in a distant third place. He also suggested that religion may have enjoyed priority over ethnicity because it had historical links with party mobilisation, and that there were alternative avenues in the society for expressing ethnic interests. There was no doubt, however, that class lagged far behind in the extent of its political effect.

What might be seen as a contrasting opinion on this issue is that of Mason (1992), who makes the point that despite the ubiquity of ethnic stratification, serious open ethnic conflict as such is relatively rare. To this valid observation one must add the point that class-based organisation and action is commonplace in most complex societies. But the test of the power of ethnicity does not lie only in its potential for open conflict. Dench points out that class loyalties, being based on competitive levels of relative material advantage and disadvantage, are not as resilient as ethnic loyalties because they are subject to segmentation and internal differentiation:

*"Real material interests tend to unite small segments much more powerfully than large ... class-in-itself is still light years and many prayers away from becoming a class-for-itself."* (Dench, 1986: 192)

These points are not the issue, however. The issue is that ethnicity tends to have a more powerful effect than class in its interaction with political variables, and when ethnic conflict emerges, it is more difficult to resolve than material disputes.

The critical question to be answered is whether or not ethnicity as a form of social identification and mobilisation has a tendency to encourage or promote conflict more than other forms of interest articulation in society, and for that reason needs special treatment. In popular discourse the point is often made that religious and ethnic conflicts are more difficult to resolve than class-based conflict because the issues in dispute in the case of the former are never quantitative. A strike over wages, a movement of protest over taxation or a land dispute between communities can often be resolved with a trade-off, a quantitative compromise. It needs no particular insight to realise that trade-offs are less possible when categorical distinctions or symbolic values are involved. A settlement offering a religious minority half of its claim to truth or an ethnic or racial group half of its claim to dignity is likely to be more aggravating than reconciling. The symbolism mobilised simply does not lend itself to mediation.

Donald Horowitz, in a section entitled *"The long reach of ethnicity"* describes how pervasive the ethnic dimension can be in a multi-cultural society:

*"The permeative propensities of ethnic affiliations in divided societies are easily demonstrated ... ethnicity finds its way into a myriad of issues: development plans, educational controversies, trade union affairs, land policy, business policy, tax policy. Characteristically, issues that elsewhere would be relegated*

*to the category of routine administration assume a central place on the political agenda of ethnically divided societies."* (Horowitz. 1985: 8)

Other particular aspects of this problematic have been identified by some of the other authors reviewed thus far. De Vos, for example, makes the point that ethnic groups can maintain their solidarity and commitments even to their own material and status disadvantage (de Vos, 1990: 206, 212), and that ethnic mobilisation can involve irrational elements which makes ethnicity *"... function as a continual source of instability in complex stratified social systems"* (206).

Another feature of ethnicity, which de Vos, among many others has mentioned, is the longevity of ethnic memory. In a few paragraphs he suggests that the germs of early 20th century German racial ideology could conceivably be traced back to the particular patterns of conquest of agricultural Slav people south of the Baltic by Teutonic knights in the eleventh century. He talks of a *"psychocultural European "disease" ... that is a cultural inheritance of the middle ages"* (182, 183). *"Ethnic maintenance depends on the force of feelings developed in the past as well as events in the present"* (de Vos, 1990: 216). As a phenomenon which has an intrinsic tendency to justify itself on the basis of ancestral tradition or experience, ethnicity can call into play and reactivate past trauma or injury to the group at any time. Since past injury cannot be corrected by present policy, ethnic mobilisation can produce totally insoluble problems for the present. One can seriously ask the question of whether any form of affirmative action will ever be able to ameliorate the collective pain of simply the knowledge of their slavery for Afro-Americans.

Then de Vos also makes reference to phenomena associated with threatened group identity which he calls *"projection"* and *"pejorative displacement"*, which are better known by the commonplace word *"scapegoating"*. De Vos makes the point that

*"Group identity is very often based, partially at least, on an ability to perceive outsiders in a contrasting pejorative sense ... outsiders can be evaluated negatively in reference to traits that may be equally present but are not recognizable within one's own group."* (1990: 68)

This is also otherwise known as stereotyping and a similar concept in the literature on race relations is *"stigma"*. Once again, it hardly needs to be stated that inter-group reconciliation is made infinitely more difficult by such processes where they exist, and

they exist very often in ethnic and racial interaction and mobilisation, for reasons which will be explored presently.

Where in-group maintenance is associated with rituals of "purity", and where such rituals have involved pain or self-sacrifice, then a boundary is established between the in-group and others which has deep significance for the individuals concerned. At a collective level this can lead to pariah status for the outsiders in the minds of the in-group members, and to the notion that the danger of "contamination" is ever present in dealing with the outsiders. These processes can make ethnic reconciliation infinitely more problematic than, say, a class conflict. Very frequently the blending of religious and ethnic identity sets a basis for the development of notions of purity (see de Vos and Suarez-Orosco, 1990: 167-179 for a discussion of notions of purity in ethnicity).

Drawing out the implications of these features would suggest, then, that the ethnic (or religious and other communal factors) in situations of conflict add to any instrumental concerns the intensifying factor of affective ties -- much more intense than interest involvement. Horowitz (1985: 14) makes the point that if the rewards in the case of ethnic conflict

*"... lie in the area of psychic gratification, or if the calculations of the participants are so relative that no benefit is considered a gain unless it comes at the expense of an opponent",*

which he would agree is often the case with ethnic conflicts, the potential for an intensification of conflict is obvious.

This is why class-based conflict, except among leaders and intellectuals who might feel that their worth and dignity is ignored by a bourgeois establishment, appears not to generate the heat of ethnic or religious conflict. Interest competition without an ethnic dimension may be more frequent, but it seldom has the capacity to arouse irrational passions the way ethnicity can.

At the same time, however, as a qualification of the suggestion that ethnicity intensifies social conflict, one has to acknowledge a very common, indeed well-nigh universal pattern of dual identity or biculturalism. As ubiquitous as mobilised ethnicity is the phenomenon of ethnic groups associating themselves with over-arching national

identities. The frequent reference to Italian-Americans or Irish-Americans, to Scots-British, to German Swiss, to Tamil or Gujarati Indians and the like bring to mind the very many instances in world culture where a dual identity is not necessarily problematic. De Vos quotes a number of authors to suggest that biculturalism is not always characterised by the marginality of the ethnic minorities involved, as many earlier authors feared (de Vos, 1990: 234).

### 3.4 THE INDETERMINACY OF ETHNIC CONFLICT POTENTIAL

Quite clearly none of the propositions above can plausibly claim that mobilisation and dissent are inevitable. While many of them will account for the pervasiveness of the phenomenon of ethnic dissent, there is a large margin of indeterminacy in the phenomenon.

Part of the reason for the indeterminacy and variability of the ethnic dynamic as it relates to dissent is that ethnic phenomena and consciousness are infinitely fluid and capable of what one could call "*self-augmentation*" or "*self-negation*", to the point that it is well-nigh impossible to define "*hard*" indicators of ethnic identity itself, let alone predicting a propensity for mobilised action. Denis-Constant Martin (1995: 5-21), among others, has described ethnic action as a "*narrative*" -- a script which is infinitely capable of being rewritten by the actors under the impact of changing opportunities as perceived by themselves. Hence an ethnic "*idea*" can be created within a situation in which it may not hitherto have been a very prominent possibility, and it can evaporate equally unexpectedly if some alternative set of opportunities presents itself. Examples are given of Hindu nationalism mobilised in response to perceived external threats from Muslims in India, with the Hindu group feeling arching over different racial and cultural groups. Who would have expected light-skinned Brahmin elites and black Dravidian peasants to perceive a common identity and commit themselves to a common struggle? Power and class interests might have less mutability than ethnic phenomena. Ethnicity is perhaps closer in form and characteristics to linguistic phenomena in its capacity for subtle variability.

This is not to say that ethnicity is an ephemeral phenomenon or epiphenomenon. There is a sufficient commonality to ethnic phenomena where they present themselves, to justify the assumption of a powerful and "*generic*" underlying dynamic, which can be mute or explosive, depending on a complexity of factors.

One also has to allow for the possibility of "*tiers*" or layers of identification. Hence there may be a most basic specific ethnic loyalty, but at a more general level a racial solidarity in which different ethnic groups combine in contradistinction to a third group of racial outsiders. This has been typical of many colonial situations and is particularly relevant in the South African case. It can apply to inclusive Chinese, Indian and Anglo Saxon groups outside of their countries of origin as well. Since, as we have agreed, race can be a form of ethnicity, one then has the situation of both more specific and more inclusive ethnic categorisations in a society, which may dilute the potential intensity of a particular primary identification. At the time of writing, a news item has reported a multi-ethnic solidarity protest against racism in Sidney, Australia, involving Aborigines and various Asian groups (Citizen, 25/11/1996).

Indeed one of the hallmarks of complex modern industrial society is that of dual or multiple roles, statuses and identifications. As the previous chapter signalled, one of the objectives of this study is to elaborate the formula for stable and mutually acceptable accommodations involving both specific and overarching ethnic loyalties in stable balance. For present purposes let us record that despite its "*intensifying*" potential, ethnicity need not always be the source of stress and stand-offs in a society. Ethnicity is a highly combustible element, but it is not inevitably ignited.

One must accept, therefore, that in terms of its conflict potential, ethnicity is not a zero-sum factor but manifests itself in degrees. The dimension of the degree of intensification which ethnicity imparts interacts with the dimension of types of interests involved. Ethnic conflict can be about as many issues as any other form of conflict. Extracting from personal recall, and from Horowitz (1985), Stone (1985) and a number of other authors one may broadly summarise the patterns in the following categories of active, mobilised or institutionalised ethnicity:

- ethnic groups as surrogate classes;

- intra-class ethnic divisions, most frequently seen in the phenomenon of divided labour markets with all the potential which that has for intensifying competition for scarce job opportunities or occupational status advancement (see chapter 2);
- ethnic groups in status competition or in conflict over relative group worth, which often results in competition for symbolic rewards rather than material advantages;
- the phenomenon already referred to of "*internal colonialism*", in which all the claims of a particular group may be frustrated by a dominant group -- material advantages and access to material resources, group status and honour and access to power;
- the phenomenon of the fully developed plural society, as described by J.S. Furnivall (1948), M.G. Smith (1965), Leo Kuper and M.G. Smith (1969), within which cultural segments or subgroups become incorporated into the central market economy but are segregated and/or choose to retain a separate sphere of societal existence more or less complete in itself. The principle is that "*formations*" much more comprehensive than classes, strata or minorities are differentially incorporated into the political economy of the society which emerges as a combination of both ethnic strata and ethnic "*pillars*", coherently manipulated to serve the social, political and economic needs of the dominant group or groups. It will be argued that, notwithstanding the fact that the concept of the plural society has fallen into disuse, South African society was a classic case of a "*plural society*" until the collapse of apartheid in 1994. But as will also be pointed out, the application of theories of the plural society to South Africa was always hotly opposed by progressive critics on the grounds that it complicated and weakened the diagnosis of the former society as a system of racism and human rights violation or as a system of capitalist exploitation of ethnic divisions in the search for control over the labour power and its reproduction.

Each one of these types of social action or organisation in which ethnicity is embroiled has a particular profile as regards potential for conflict. If one interrelates these differences with the differences in degree of conflict potential in the permutations of identity discussed above, it is abundantly clear that ethnicity is hugely complex and subtle in its associations with social conflict, but because of the "*combustibility*" of the

basic element of identity needs -- referred to earlier as their "*resonance*" -- it is also very unpredictable.



## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS FROM THE LITERATURE: EMERGING PROPOSITIONS

This dissertation has a dual focus; one general and the other the South African case study. In respect of the general focus, a contribution might be made by drawing together aspects of the literature reviewed in a series of propositions, even though only some of them might turn out to be relevant to the South African case study.

A large number of interrelated propositions can be drawn from the review of the literature. The variety of these propositions poses a challenge of integration for theory. Furthermore, the points made in the review of the literature have often suggested wider generalisations. As a consequence the propositions made below are either directly drawn from the literature reviewed, or are elaborations consonant with the literature.

In the interests of brevity, they will be organised in a schema. This kind of treatment is not ideal because ethnicity is redolent of subtlety and at times blurred meanings and ambiguity, not to mention the indeterminacy discussed in the last chapter. The attempt which follows is therefore subject to serious qualifications, but it may shorten the process of drawing conclusions nevertheless.

The procedure which will be followed will be to proceed through different levels of the phenomenon, identifying first the necessary conditions for or features of ethnic consciousness, followed by what appear to be the patterns relevant to ethnic group construction (boundary formation, and coherence (conditions of membership, access and affiliation, norms and rules of association, etc), then the definition of interests, thereafter the conditions which seem to be relevant to mobilisation and goal-directed interaction or ethnically-based activism and contestation. In this exercise references to the authors or postulates in the literature will be omitted for the sake of brevity and clarity.

## A. LEVEL ONE: CONSCIOUSNESS

- A1. A necessary, but not sufficient condition for ethnic consciousness is a category of people which is distinguishable in terms of a marker or markers of social identity, or which considers itself to be distinguishable in this way, even if no specific or exclusive markers exist.
- A2. Ethnic consciousness in this category will have emerged if the group has developed a self-definition of identity which relates to an objective, imagined or rationalised feature of common ancestry and historical origin, or values it considers to be derived from such origins, whether such identity relates to all the markers or not (a group which has a sense of common origin may be most prominently marked by religious adherence)
- A3. Such a self-definition need not be made by all or even a majority of the individuals to whom the markers apply, but needs only to include a significant proportion of the potential members defining themselves in this way; every category in social analysis has core and marginal membership. Hence the self-conscious core of an ethnic group can be a sub-category of a language or cultural group.
- A4. Such self-definitions are highly probable because of the very basic levels of need gratification which a consciousness associated with kinship and the roots of individual identity can contribute. Ethnic consciousness, however, is vulnerable to alternative avenues for need gratification (see below).
- A5. A group which defines itself solely in terms other than origin or putative origin and ancestry (e.g. a religious group which has an exclusively confessional definition of itself) may respond like an ethnic group under certain circumstances but it will rather be a sect or a denomination, not an ethnic group. A religious group which has a historical association between religion and ancestral origin is an ethnic group, however.

- A6. This self-definition may be public, overt or disguised, usually depending on the sanctions imposed by the wider community.
- A7. Consciousness is a very fluid and subtle phenomenon, and it is an issue subject to indeterminacy and unpredictability, hence is by no means an automatic consequence of cultural distinctiveness or even of discrimination against the category of people in question.
- A8. Ethnic consciousness, as a consequence of the features outlined immediately above, can be very "*impressionable*" as it were, and is vulnerable to competing or overarching values and loyalties. A strong and effective overarching state, values in the overarching polity which reduce the moral legitimacy of ethnic commitments, for example, can weaken ethnic consciousness and create ambivalence.
- A9. Hence the emergence of a marked ethnic consciousness is likely to require a credible category of ethnic leadership, of sufficient strength as role models to counteract the universalistic or assimilatory values in overarching national polities, and this will be particularly true if "*nation-building*" projects by the central state are a prominent feature of the political system.
- A10. In modern states ethnic consciousness is part of a morality play, and has to vie with the heroic actor of the central state, which frequently has the resources to outbid minority ethnic groups for audience attention.
- A11. Ethnic consciousness is likely to be most marked among categories of people who cannot rely on individual effort and achievement to bring psychic and material rewards. The modern Western liberal state and achievement-based economies are likely to erode ethnic consciousness among those categories of a cultural group which can compete on the terms laid down by the economy.
- A12. The group in question may relate itself to an entire national territory, and under such circumstances will be a sub-type of ethnicity usually referred to as nationalism.

- A13. The nomenclature involved in the self-identification may or may not relate to the objective or putative origin (e.g. Afrikaners have a sense of Germanic origin but their label is African; one of the symbolic references of the militant Northern Irish Protestant activists is that of the historical Dutch Royal House of Orange).
- A14. Where an ethnic consciousness has coincided with other aspirations or interests over a period of time, they can usurp the ethnic consciousness to the extent that the resulting self-identification becomes an inseparable blend of material and symbolic factors. The original elements of the consciousness will, however, be at least latently present to impart an intensity and coherence which might not otherwise exist.
- A15. Given the roots of ethnic consciousness in real or putative ancestral and kinship loyalties it tends to be among the more intense forms of consciousness.
- A16. This consciousness can be strengthened if there is an association between class and ethnicity, as in ranked ethnic groups. Similarly, an ethnic component can strengthen class-consciousness. Class-consciousness in the modern industrial state tends to be weaker than ethnic consciousness because of economic mobility opportunities and the complexities in the modern division of labour.
- A17. Hence ethnic consciousness, because of the greater stability of the factors underlying it, tends to be more intense in its expression than class-consciousness.

**B. LEVEL TWO: BOUNDARY CONSTRUCTION AND GROUP COHERENCE**

- B1. A category of people which has a collective consciousness which may be defined as ethnic will have acquired the structure of an ethnic group if the group has established criteria of membership, criteria to distinguish themselves from proximal groups, and formal or informal yet established and institutionalised rules governing behaviour relevant to group affiliation.

- B2. The group has located itself and been located in the social space in relation to other groups. This can include anything from establishing rules of social distance to coalitions or alliances with other groups.
- B3. The patterns suggested above will determine whether groups are ranked or unranked in relation to one another, and of roughly equal status in society or not. In ranked systems the boundaries and the rules of association are often imposed on the group by the higher ranked groups, but to some degree or another, groups of inferior ranking can accept the conditions imposed on them and use them as a basis for consciousness and solidarity.
- B4. In unranked systems the boundary processes and the rules of affiliation will tend to originate within group dynamics, but they are under the influence of the interaction with other groups. It follows that the difference in dynamics between ranked and unranked systems is not absolute, and some unranked groups are more equal than others, enjoying closer association with power elites in the society at large. It is possible for an unranked system to become changed into a ranked system over time, and vice-versa.
- B5. The boundary formation can be inadvertent, can be forced upon the group by external structures, or can be as a consequence of strategic considerations among ethnic leaders who will mobilise to secure adherence to boundary rules.
- B6. The boundary construction is only partly related to the intrinsic qualities of the ethnic category and can also be determined by the strategic requirements of the interaction with other groups, other nations or with the overarching nation state.
- B7. The criteria and the rules and boundaries may remain fixed or may change over time, in response to social changes within the group or in response to changed relations with other groups.
- B8. Just as not all individuals who are eligible to develop ethnic consciousness have the need to do so, so rules associated with the boundaries of groups' needs are

not necessarily adhered to by all eligible individuals. There is always a lesser or greater proportion of people who in terms of ethnic rules are marginal to the group.

- B9. Such individuals may disavow their group membership, or they may attempt to establish competing rules, or they may operate outside the group but in the name of the group, which is often seen as the most serious form of disloyalty.
- B10. The extent to which the group secures adherence to the rules of association and commitment to group goals is a measure of the coherence of ethnic groups. No ethnic group is utterly coherent, but if the zone of coherence is limited to a tiny minority of the group, it will be at risk of ceasing to be an ethnic group and will tend to be regarded as a faction. Obviously, ethnic groups can become reduced to factions, and vice-versa.
- B11. The whole issue of boundary formations and maintenance must take account of the phenomenon that ethnicity can be a layered phenomenon. Two or more ethnic groups may be distinct at a primary level but at a secondary level develop affinities with similar ethnic formations. This will be typically the case where groups share a particularly salient marker, such as racial status. Inter-ethnic coalitions of whites differentiating themselves from blacks have been familiar in colonial dynamics.

### **C. LEVEL THREE: THE DEFINITION AND ARTICULATION OF INTERESTS**

- C1. Where the scope of an ethnic group is national and the phenomenon can be regarded as nationalism, the issue of interests need not be treated in any different way to the approach adopted for society in general. In an intensely nationalistic society, the major focus of relevant ethnic interests will relate to neighbouring states and to the international community.
- C2. This does not mean to say that all manifestations of nationalism coincide with ethnicity, since some forms of nationalism will in fact be ethnic coalitions within

the over-arching state, as for example in the case of Indian, Swiss or British nationalism, to the extent that they exist. Many authors will insist that this form of nationalism be treated differently to ethnicity, and notwithstanding the descriptive validity of their points, so much of the dynamic of nationalism is in fact a variant of ethnic consciousness that it may be treated as a more inclusive ethnic "*layer*" in terms of the proposition offered earlier. An over-arching nationalism can become a type of secondary "ethnicity". The civic identification with a formal state, which is usually referred to as "patriotism", is indeed a different type of consciousness.

- C3. It is entirely possible for inter-ethnic "*coalitions*" to have their interests converge so closely over time that the more particular ethnic cultures will become assimilated into a more general association. In other words, one must assume that ethnic groups at any given time may have originated in a coalescing of two or more ethnic groups in the past – Afrikaners would be a case in point.
- C4. Where the ethnic unit coincides with a nationality or citizenship, it will become internally differentiated along lines other than ethnic, such as class lines. If the nationalism is intense enough, then one would expect the internal interests-competition to be less intense than in a state in which nationalism is more subdued. From this comes the popular notion that national sport (or war) can "*bring a nation together*".
- C5. To return to the type of ethnicity which is based on internal differentiation within a state, the ways in which interests are formed and the permutations of interests are many and varied. Reference was made earlier in this report to ethnicity as a vessel in which all manner of content can be poured (Barth).
- C6. First one must postulate the existence of ethnic status interests. A generally poor ethnic group can be so captivated by concerns with status and social honour that its members will be proud of those few members who become rich. It would not be unfamiliar if the more privileged minority even exploits its poorer brothers confident that class consciousness will not surmount the status barrier to disturb

the process. Here is a case where the Marxian notion of false consciousness, cautiously applied in its context, has utility.

- C7. Status and social honour is convertible into other advantages, and vice-versa. The typical pattern of the conversion of great wealth into status and honour (through the Queen's lists in the UK or through great public benevolence) is familiar in many societies. But if status relied only on its conversion into wealth and power it would not be commonplace among the less wealthy or powerful. The primary currency of status and social honour is pride and well being -- psychic gratification, and hence status in its own right is its own reward. This is why ethnic attachments can be regarded as one of the most generally available gratifications in otherwise stratified societies. Even without general public acknowledgement, the sense of pride that members of a generally under-privileged ethnic group will feel, are self-sustaining.
- C8. It has been suggested above that material privilege and status and esteem can "leverage" each other, and they can also coincide. Once ethnicity has established a self-categorisation in a cultural group, the coherence, the self-confidence and the boundary maintaining networks can, and often are, turned to the pursuit of other interests in the realms of power or economic opportunity. The boundary-maintaining processes will also be of immense strategic advantage in keeping competition at bay.
- C9. The rewards and advantages of group definition and boundary formation which take an ethnic form, contrary to the Marxist position, are not the primary catalysts for the group definition. The Marxist position assumes processes that cannot be demonstrated and are mystifying. To assume that a class interest will somehow set about creating the intimate personal attachments of ethnicity from nothing at all in order to justify privilege is far-fetched. The self-categorisation of the symbolic kind found in ethnicity has to be present at least in the form of nascent identity before material or power interests march in to add the heavy artillery. The real or imagined kinship association is the primary factor, although, as with apartheid, it may end in being trivial compared with its consequences.



- C10. The postulate above also implies that the so called processes of group "*construction*", in the form of boundary maintenance, social closure against competition by other groups and the like, although muscular and ultimately decisive in forming the structure of ethnic interaction with society and other groups, are also secondary as compared with the real or imagined kinship attachments, because it would again require an extremely fanciful conception of social process to suggest that greed and competition for scarce resources will search around for ways in which to create some line in the sand of society in which to construct an identity. The extraneous self-interests have to cohere around something which has an independent significance.
- C11. This may appear to be bringing "*primordality*" in by the back door. By accepting the feature of primacy of the identity-based core of ethnic structure, one is in a sense accepting "*primordality*", but not of the kind which assumes an "*ineffable*" objective reality. The primary attachments may never occur because they are options in human history, and other sources of primary identification such as religion (without ethnic undertones) or individualistic self-expression are available.
- C12. But this brings one back to the point that the ethnic or kinship oriented attachment is the most generally available option, hence its ubiquity. It does not require ability, effort or the seclusion from worldly tastes that religion in its authentic form usually entails -- it is the Weberian "*peoples option*".
- C13. As the "*people's option*" in a manner of speaking, one might expect the major opposition to ethnic expression in modern and many ancient societies to come not from the other popular interests (even if ethnic groups hate and compete with each other they usually accept each other as realities), but from the elites whose interests are by definition pursued within the widest possible frame of reference. A national power elite will resist and attempt to discredit not only separatist movements but also value systems which reduce the importance of over-arching social networks, reward systems and scope of power. A President wants after all to be President of all the people, and a top socialite, artist, writer, gang boss or

trade unionist would also want to increase the surface area of his or her "*pond*". In most nation states the national system of status and reward is the "*first team*", and no first team player wants to be rendered equal by a regional hero.

- C14. This is why the main opposition to ethnic claims tends to come from the universalistically oriented high urban cultural centres. But here again one must guard against the assumption of deliberate intent. Those value systems which oppose ethnic attachments do not construct their case for the purpose. The more universalistic or international-humanitarian value positions are genuine commitments and possibly even superior in moral status for mankind. But just as interests discover the useful vehicles of an authentic ethnic attachment, so the universalistically oriented elites find their own value systems useful as a basis for opposing and denigrating the ethnic attachments.
  
- C15. But in doing so these elites, sometimes inadvertently, and sometimes deliberately attempt to prevent access by ordinary people to the more easily available gratifications of ethnic attachment. No union boss, politician, official or personality wants his or her constituency or audience divided by "*lesser*" forms of social differentiation. If all the good and universal values fail to fill up the small ethnic ponds, then the heavier earth-moving equipment of patriotism and nation building may be tried, and as history has shown, sometimes with great effect and sometimes with contradictory consequences.
  
- C16. The point above raises the issue of how resilient ethnic interests are. Extraneous interests which coincide with ethnicity would be expected to increase the resilience. What if extraneous interests do not coincide but contradict ethnic interests? A typical example will be class interests which could be contradicted by ethnic interests. It is logical to assume that ethnic interests will be weakened in such cases but the outcome may not be certain or clear-cut. Since the postulate has been made that ethnic commitments are typically intense, it may be proposed that class interests will not readily negate ethnic commitments, but every commitment has its price. It must be assumed to depend on the relative weight of rewards.

- C17. But this clear-cut situation does not always arise, because ethnicity can "*co-opt*" class interests as it were by dividing the labour or other "*markets*" and closing off opportunities for other groups to compete. This is a general possibility not limited to working class dynamics, and ethnic elites can produce the same processes of segregating off competition for advantages.
- C18. This raises the question of whether ethnicity co-opts class or class co-opts ethnicity. The Marxist analysis would incline one to expect the latter. But in terms of the assumptions made by these same analysts class-consciousness tends to be universalistic abstract and rational, while ethnic commitments, whether at working class or elite level are more emotive and motivating. When the early South Africa Communist Party coined the slogan "*workers of the world unite to protect white workers*", it was probably a case of ethnicity (racism) strengthened by class interests, co-opting class solidarity for a different purpose.
- C19. If the class interests coinciding with the ethnic identity of an ethnic category are blocked or frustrated by opposition to the ethnic aspect, and the rewards are very salient (the principle of every interest having a price), then an ethnic group may begin to suppress or retreat from its open ethnic commitments in order to secure its advantages. This situation would be an incentive for assimilation. Given the intensity of ethnic commitments, the price would have to be high. The ethnic group could also withdraw its ethnic commitments into a private sphere and in all public or civic dealings present itself as part of the "*open order*", as it were. There is sufficient evidence of an enthusiasm for "*passing*" in societies for this to be accepted as fairly commonplace, albeit associated with great personal tension and conflict. The stress of these situations is quite capable of producing self-hatred.
- C20. If, however, the interest groups to which entry is sought, prevent entry through mechanisms of discrimination and "*social closure*", then the ethnic commitments are likely to intensify in order to protect the morale of the ethnic group rebuffed in this way.

- C21. To return to situations of successful interest driven assimilation, the proposition has been made that the rewards or potential rewards would have to be substantial, and given the primacy of ethnic commitments, even while suppressed for long periods, residues of identity commitments would remain and can become activated long after successful assimilation appears to have occurred -- in some cases centuries (a recent account in *The Economist* (July 3, 1999:88) of a resurgence of Basque ethnicity among the descendants of successfully integrated 19th US pioneer settler stock is an interesting recent example).
- C22. This leads to the conclusion that working class people who move into the middle classes are hardly ever likely to celebrate their working class or peasant origins, but a celebration of ethnic origins among successfully assimilated ethnic groups is very frequent.
- C23. In attempting to disentangle class and ethnic commitments and interests, however, it is probably wisest to assume opaque and muddy blends of sentiment and values. The principle of mutual contagion of commitments is very likely to apply. Nevertheless, on balance, it would seem as if the ethnic mobilisation in material competition has more reinforcing elements and magnifying features than purely class-based mobilisation. Although not exclusively so, class and power-based mobilisation has a greater tendency for schism and splitting than ethnic mobilisation.

#### **D. ETHNIC MOBILISATION, ACTIVISM AND CONFLICT**

- D1. Where ethnic groups have long established boundaries both of a social and geographical nature, and have internal economies (the situations which are referred to as plural societies as defined by Furnival and Smith) and hence do not have to compete with each other, ethnic differences are more compatible with coexistence in an overarching state (India would be an example, with exceptions).
- D2. Where, however, centralised political systems and economies, or boundary disturbances whether social or geographical, disturb the norms of mutual co-

operation or avoidance on which stability is based, ethnic groups will be at risk of developing ethnically defined antagonisms and conflicts. The Protestant people of Northern Ireland could hypothetically have the same cordial or neutral relations with the Catholic Irish as the Scots or the Welsh, but they share a contested space. The same principles seem to be operative underneath all the other layers of conflict in respect of Turks and Kurds, Serbians and Kosovars, Sri Lankans and Tamils, and hundreds of other examples. These are situations in which a shared but segregated dispensation has been bequeathed by history.

- D3 In modern integrated and centrally organised states, four alternatives and very different sets of rules can secure the stability of the "*good fences make good neighbours*" principle. One is a principle of multiculturalism, a normative order which is effective in liberal democratic systems which provide widespread security. Another is the principle of decentralisation or devolution, in which the state provides a modern surrogate of the older tribal or community autonomy and separation, but overlaid with rational norms of co-operation and integration based in the distinction between tiers of government. This can be formal and constitutional or it can be an evolutionary reconciliation of relationships as with the earlier Dutch system of internal social "*pillars*" (*zuilen*) of Protestant, Catholic and secular socialist traditions. A third "*reconciliation*" occurs in some ranked ethnic systems in which the minor ethnic groups for periods or to some extent accept the seniority of the majority group or higher status group. The other principle is that of assimilation and nation-building. The latter two are arguably the least stable and effective systems of securing coexistence.
- D4. If the assimilation principle is authentically equitable, i.e. mutual assimilation, and all assimilees are of equal status and if it cushions its effects by tolerating residues of multiculturalism, the assimilation principle is effective. The problem, however, often arises because the question of who assimilates whom is at stake. If a majority or historically powerful group assimilates on its own terms an ethnic minority, then the reward trade-offs for the assimilated minority have to be substantial (an ethnic market-clearing price as it were). This is possible in prosperous and rapidly growing economies.

- D5. Also, if the dominant group backs the process with powerful, rational norms and moral precepts which permeate the society, to the extent of displacing the more particularistic ethnic commitments by convincing the ethnic minorities that they should not be atavistic and "*backward*", it may also work. This is a process of introducing a moral block which denies the ethnic minority the legitimacy of the gratifications of ethnic attachments.
- D6. If, however, the majority attempts the assimilationist programme with a less than persuasive material and moral rationale, then these situations are likely to lead to conflict.
- D7. In ranked systems of ethnic domination by majority groups, premised on the assumption that there are core and marginal, senior and junior, or first class and second class citizens, are the least stable systems of ethnic integration. In a world which is extending democracy and human rights, this is almost inevitably associated with ethnic conflict because of the uncertainty it generates. The conflict is more intense than class conflict, for a variety of reasons, one of which is that in class conflict the elites, deliberately or otherwise, benefit from national rituals which allow the poor classes to feel part of the nation -- sport, religion or powerful national symbols being among the mechanisms. In ranked ethnic systems on the other hand, the minority groups are kept in their place often without the ruse of being made to feel part of the nation.
- D8. There could be situations, however, where a combination of moral rationalisations for the advantaged status of the majority and material gratifications might persuade a negatively ranked ethnic minority to accept its relative status -- there can be no mechanical predictions of dissent.
- D9. Where an ethnic group has developed grievances, one still cannot predict that organised active dissent will emerge. If the group in question has engaged in such action before the probability of dissent will be increased, simply because patterns of leadership, networks or organisations and other forms of preparedness may exist, and there may be a group tradition of militancy.

- D10. Other factors will have to be in place as well. Such factors have been established in comparative empirical work and include perceptions of a reasonable chance of success, and motivations which outweigh the negative sanctions or coercion which are likely to follow -- in other words a positive strategic balance of probabilities as perceived by the aggrieved group.
- D11. In this context it is particularly relevant to consider what the group may have to lose. A group which is already in a position of material disadvantage will have less to lose than a group which is protecting a relatively advantaged, albeit deteriorating situation.
- D12. One must assume, however, that if the grievances are sufficiently serious and or the ethnic status consciousness is sufficiently strong, the constraining factors will lose relative weight. The grievance factor may be particularly salient if the ethnic group in question has suffered loss of status or material advantage, or if its situation is one of being "*squeezed*" in the sense that no options for escape from a deteriorating situation are offered by the political majority in a country.
- D13. An open question is to what extent dissent over strategy within an ethnic group is likely to reduce or increase the chances of active dissent. It could cut both ways. On the one hand it would seem to be logical to assume that different strategic agendas in a group will weaken the coherence and the mobilising capacity within the group. On the other hand, however, a polarisation within the group may isolate extremists from moderating influences and increase the probability of an ethnic sub-formation taking very militant action. The situations in Northern Ireland, among the Basques in Spain, the Tamils in Sri Lanka and many other theatres of ethnic conflict would appear to bear out the second proposition.

The propositions above are almost embarrassingly numerous, but the complexity of interacting factors in ethnic action, which are often taken as indeterminacy, warrant the detail presented -- in fact more could have been added. Even with all the detail, nuances have inevitably been missed. As Ghai et al point out:

*"As a source of conflict, ethnicity takes its coloration from the specific circumstances of time and society. It is difficult to pin it down as an independent variable in the ordering of social, political and economic life ... Ethnicity is (also) highly manipulable: indeed its very existence can be conjured out of vague bonds and symbols of association. There is a dynamic quality to ethnicity which suggests that more attention should be paid to history than is customary..."* (Ghai et al, 1992:81, quoted by Bekker. 1993: 8).

The author almost regrets that he has not been able to justify the application of any single paradigm to the phenomenon in question, in order to avoid the detail, and yet the detail may not be enough.

The propositions, in their present detail, however, would appear to cover the possibilities which might be expected in the review of ethnic reactions in the South African case study. Most basically, however, with the degree of oversimplification necessary for a brief summary, what the propositions, taken together, suggest is that ethnicity:

- is not primordial as a consequence of any objective factor, but has a primordial-like quality being associated with sentiments of origin and kinship and being based on identity needs, which intensify the phenomenon;
- is a category of status interests *sui generis*, and that these interests can be intensely held because of their emotive underpinnings;
- but that these emotive dimensions are variable in their manifestation because of the presence in most societies of alternative need gratifiers, the variable strength of individualism in modern society and the susceptibility of populations to the values associated with nation state loyalties and/or universal values which can be exploited to discredit ethnicity;
- that in its construction over time, and in the establishment and maintenance of its boundaries, ethnicity becomes blended with other, non-ethnic interests, and can become structured by them and even usurped; and
- that its propensity for survival, political mobilisation or activist dissent, depends on grievances which cannot be assuaged by alternative rewards, persuasive moral rationalisation for action articulated by leaders and opinion-formers, and equally persuasive prospects for success which outweigh perceived constraints on ethnic action and perceived risks of such action;



- that, as a consequence of these variable factors, the scope of core ethnic mobilisation can vary greatly and that it is logical to assume that a threshold exists below which there will be insufficient momentum or critical mass to sustain the ethnic "*enterprise*".

Most importantly, what these conclusions suggest is that the three competing schools of theory have to be integrated and reconciled to enhance the explanatory power of ethnic theory.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDY: BACKGROUND PERSPECTIVES ON AFRIKANER ETHNICITY

The amount of background literature on or around the issue of ethnicity in South Africa is vast, but it has been dominated by the huge issue of apartheid. Therefore much of this scholarship has not been directed at the phenomenon itself but at its apparent consequences or at policy issues relating to it. As already suggested earlier, analyses have tended to leap over the intrinsic aspects of ethnicity, making assumptions about its nature and status, in order to proceed to assess its role in racial conflict. Since this case study has a different focus, being concerned with the phenomenon itself and its persistence or otherwise, many very familiar and significant writings on South Africa will be omitted, with regret. Relevant literature on the issue of race domination and conflict will, however, be referred to as the case study proceeds.

#### 5.1 THE EMERGENCE OF AFRIKANERS AS AN ETHNIC GROUP

Ethnicity is a phenomenon *par excellence* which has to be understood in the light of its history and the factors which are powerful in its emergence. This is because the myths or binding realities of origin are so powerful as components of ethnic consciousness. Although this very definitely cannot pretend to be a historical analysis, a brief review of the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism is necessary. In this section an account will be given which is as factual as possible, and a conceptual assessment will follow in the next section.

It is perhaps important to note that Afrikaner ethnicity does not have its origins in a clan or tribe or in a geographically concentrated face-to-face community of great antiquity. It is not being suggested that all ethnicity has to begin this way, but the origins may conceivably

help to explain later responses of the group, and therefore it is necessary to briefly trace the process in the case of Afrikaners.

The category in question had its earliest origins in the Dutch East India Company's provisioning settlement at the Cape in 1652. Only some 37 per cent of the earliest settlers were in fact of core Dutch origin, as has already been explained (Heese, 1971). Degenaar (1987: 244-245) gives a similar set of estimates for the early composition of Afrikaners as German 35 per cent, Dutch 34 per cent, French 13 per cent, "non-white" 7 per cent, British 5 per cent, other European 3 per cent and unknown 4 per cent. What they had in common was management by a large paternalistic and bureaucratic corporation which attempted to regulate virtually all aspects of their lives, a common exposure as largely Christian Europeans to non-Christian indigenous races of different pigmentation and customs, the institution of slavery, which the settler elites benefited from, and exposure to the individualistic and commercial values which were spreading across Europe. As the employees were released from Company service to become "*Free Burghers*" (settlers on own account, as it were), they pursued agricultural or commercial market-oriented enterprise and risk-ventures in a hostile new environment, in contrast to the indigenous Khoi people whose economies were largely of a subsistence kind. Within 20 years of the first settlement two wars with the Khoi people had occurred, no doubt substantially of the settlers own making. As Guelke observes, they emerged quite soon as remarkably homogeneous given their origins, but it was a homogeneity based on European racial identity, Christianity and common risks on an expanding and hostile frontier (Guelke, 1979:43).

As Giliomee recounts, by the turn of the century, local concentrations of free settlers had mounted two rebellions against the Colonial authority, then British. but that there was:

*"no apparent interest in the cultural aspects of nationalism. They were not even consistently anti-imperialist or anti-British."* (Giliomee, 1979: 353)

Hence the Afrikaner identity may not yet have become established with much content distinct from that of a cultural fragment of Europe.

Giliomee (1979) points out that the Company, informally but consistently fostered a racial categorisation by its administrative procedures, creating the assumption of a superior status for the European settlers. If early ethnicity defines itself in terms of the contrasts between it and its social surroundings, a racial dimension was incorporated even before a specific sense of a cultural heritage had become established, not as racism in any intrinsic sense, but as a defining ethnic marker. The Company also encouraged a Dutch identity and in so doing established the language root of what was later to become Afrikaans.

In one the most useful analytical outlines of the emergence of ethnic identity among Afrikaners, Giliomee (1979: ch. 4) identifies the following elements which contributed to the crystallisation of ethnic coherence up to the modern period. He points out that the colonial governments and the social conditions on the frontier, and by implication later in the Voortrekker Republics, fostered a sense of equality and individualism. He also points out that the "*open frontier*" on which the white "*Trekboere*" (migrant farmers) and Xhosa tribesmen often intermingled, and at times had to reach mutual accommodations with one another, produced an amount of uncertainty of status and cross-racial co-operation which was lacking in the more formal situations nearer the urban centres of the colony. He claims that there is little evidence of widespread racist thinking aside from that which arose from the Christian-"*heathen*" division. Later, when the colonial authorities intervened, when slavery was abolished and missionaries began promoting social reform, the racial reactions became more marked. Giliomee quotes evidence suggesting that the idea of an equalisation (*gelykstelling*) of Christians and non-Christians was a component in the reactions of the frontiersmen which led to the Great Trek (p95).

The Great Trek itself was not a nationalist movement as such, since it was motivated not so much by aspirations to freedom but by the desire to escape constraining legislation, deteriorating socio-economic conditions, lack of land and a breakdown of law and order. The Voortrekkers did not trek as a nation (Giliomee, 1979: 100). F.A. van Jaarsveld, however, makes the point that as the patriot rebels and the Voortrekkers encountered resistance from the British, first in Natal, it engendered in them the realisation that they were in fact creating their own history. Furthermore, their quest for freedom raised the

question of freedom for who and from what, all-nascent national sentiments (Van Jaarsveld, 1959: 16-44, *passim*).

When demands addressed to the Netherlands gained no response, the Free Burghers tended to shift their allegiance to a local identity. By the turn of the 18th Century the term "*Afrikaner*" had become established and the colonists were beginning to refer to themselves as "*true natives of our true fatherland*" (quoted by Giliomee, 1979: 97).

The emergence of a new national identity was therefore a gradual but in a sense an accumulative process, which took an inevitable course of identity-crystallisation. As Degenaar (1987) puts it, the Afrikaners "*discovered*" themselves as a "*volk*" with a common destiny. As in the United States, the new national identity emerged out of deteriorating loyalties to a former national identity, which was in any event weak by virtue of the mixed ethnic composition of the settlers.

This new identity was strengthened by the approach of the British colonial authorities to attempt to "*Anglicise*" the Dutch-speaking population through education policies and of course a general language policy. Their resistance was not born of loyalty to the Netherlands, however, and Giliomee notes that the first "*Afrikaans*" journal, *De Zuid Afrikaan*, expressed the following opinion: "... *A colonist of Dutch descent cannot become an Englishman, nor should he strive to be a Hollander*" (1979: 99). On a visit to the Cape by Trekker leaders from the North in the late eighteenth century the leaders addressed the local Afrikaners with the words "*We are, after all, of one nation, one blood, one bone and one flesh*" (Degenaar, 1987: 237).

Equally important, however, was that the reaction of the colonists to British control in the urban areas was mixed, with some colonists seeking co-operation with and indeed assimilation into the new elites (the "*Anglomanne*") and others at least maintaining a distance (Jacobijsen); a division which continued thereafter (Le Cordeur: 1986: 77). It was really only in private and in the context of the very decentralised Dutch Reformed Church that the language and aspects of the culture of the Dutch-speakers could be protected.

The divisions between different commitments became more sharply crystallised when the first major political party, the Afrikaner Bond, was founded in 1880 and became the site of a struggle of identity. One faction wanted to keep it exclusively Dutch-Afrikaans, but another, which eventually prevailed, wished to see it as more inclusive. At that stage one of the protagonists, S.J. du Toit, distinguished between three kinds of Afrikaners: those with English hearts, those with Dutch hearts and those with Afrikaner hearts; the latter being people who also sympathised with the Boer Republics in their struggles against British Imperialism. The same kind of debate about how the boundary of the Afrikaner group should be defined, and how a foreigner should be defined, raged in the Transvaal Republic, with "*exclusivists*", "*inclusivists*" and middle-of-the-road views. As time progressed and hostility to British imperialism intensified, the exclusivist view strengthened (Giliomee, 1979: 101-103).

After the Anglo-Boer War and the establishment of the Union of South Africa, the distinction between two major views on the relative exclusiveness of Afrikaners became more firmly established. Generals Botha and Smuts of the South African Party-United Party tradition saw a need for the English and Afrikaans streams among whites to merge and form a common South African patriotism within the British Empire under the Crown. In opposition to this, General Hertzog and Dr. D.F. Malan, while differing on the legitimacy of the new South African state, were committed to a preservation of perhaps not an exclusive group for Hertzog, but at least a distinctive Afrikaner identity with language as its major marker -- a two stream policy. To this end they both supported the development of the Afrikaans language and culture to the status of a "*high culture*" to replace the cultural, linguistic and intellectual dependence on Dutch and English. After the official replacement of Dutch by Afrikaans as one of the two official languages, this programme was very successful and even before 1948 the Afrikaans language had become modernised, elaborated and well institutionalised. The emphasis on Afrikaans ethnicity was also focused on the psychological needs of a people who had been exposed to humiliation and brutality at the hands of the English troops in the war, and the various attempts by the British to weaken the influence of the Afrikaans ethnic movement. Hence the ethnic cause became

centred on not only the constitutional dispensation, but also on the status and psychic needs of a population which had experienced the traumas of war, defeat and impoverishment (Giliomee, 1979: 107). The reminder of the historian, Hugh Trevor-Roper is apposite:

*"For nationalism has its normal causes. It is the expression of wounded nationality: the cry of men who have suffered great national defeat, or whose nationality is denied, or who live insecurely on exposed national frontiers and in danger of being swamped by foreigners."* (Trevor-Roper: 1962: 12)

In addition to these dimensions, the economic needs of the large numbers of poor Afrikaners who migrated to the cities in search of unskilled work, underscored the large wealth gap between the Afrikaners and the English-speakers, who had all but taken over the public service in addition to their advantaged positions in mining, and soon after in commerce and industry. The income gap was estimated to be 1:3 in 1910 (Giliomee, 1979:107).

One recourse among the poorer unskilled Afrikaner proletariat was to join the Labour Party-linked English-language trade unions, but after the thirties and the forties, when black workers entered the economy in large numbers and were able to undercut the white workers, Afrikaners withdrew from unions that had neglected and even spurned their ethnic and language needs, and joined the Christian-National Afrikaner workers' movement. Later when Hertzog, who had moved closer to the Smuts position with a notion of a cross-ethnic alliance of English-speaking and Afrikaners, took the National Party into "*fusion*" with the South African party to form the United Party. D.F. Malan (already mentioned), a theologian, who had always held more principled and rigid notions of the ethnic needs of Afrikaners, experienced additional pressure from the Afrikaner working-class movements to mobilise separately, and he broke away to form the "*purified*" National Party. His position as the articulator of both cultural/ethnic and worker interests also brought him into opposition to the influence of big mining capital with which the United Party had various kinds of links (Giliomee, 1979:110). The National Party was therefore based on a class-alliance of petit bourgeois cultural and labour interests, unified by a common threat -- the Anglophile-international lifestyle, values and language which were effectively twinned

with economic imperialist and local big capital interests co-ordinated by a bureaucracy which was seen to have been excluding Afrikaner nationalists from positions of influence.

Marxist analysts have given prominence to the class-based elements in these developments but Giliomee, while recognising the factors of class, saw the developments as being based on compound effects of class, status, ideology and psychic needs (Giliomee, 1979: 110). The National Party which had emerged stood for republican independence, the restoration of the status of the Afrikaans people to that of a core position in the nation, and the acceptance of English-speakers who were prepared to assimilate into that core. Further commitments were to the economic advancement of Afrikaners in all fields, the protection of the Afrikaner working class from competition from blacks, a two-stream cultural policy in which Afrikaans mother tongue education would be guaranteed and Afrikaans cultural and professional bodies would be promoted, the further development of the Afrikaans language and all other measures required to restore the group status and self-confidence vis à vis English, as well as the maintenance of the racial identity of the white group.

To these ends the National Party successfully mobilised most Afrikaner intellectuals who had not become co-opted into the networks of the United Party, and it practised affirmative action in promotions in the public service based on informal criteria which included support for the party itself, membership of key Afrikaans cultural and youth organisations and often membership of one of the three Dutch Reformed "*sister*" churches. Nothing was laid down formally but the use of a variable set of indicators for appointments to para-statal and government bodies worked well to ensure the rapid upward mobility of ethnically committed Afrikaners and those who supported their cause. It should be noted that there was no formal exclusion of English-speakers, and quite frequently English-speaking Protestant and Jewish National Party sympathizers were able to enjoy occupational and other benefits of political patronage. This author's (mixed Afrikaans-English, and mixed DRC and Catholic) family's own experience in the fifties was that religious affiliation was very important, with Anglican and especially Atheist and Catholic affiliation ruling even an Afrikaans-speaking recruit out of contention for meaningful positions in the public sector (the religious factor was, for example, instrumental in dividing the fairly large Dutch and



German-speaking communities in Pretoria between insider Protestants and Catholic outsiders). As Giliomee points out, the new intelligentsia among core Nationalist Afrikaners became ethnic entrepreneurs, promoting partly through the Broederbond (see ahead) the values, orientations and practices required to further the cause of a subtly, but firmly bounded ethnic category which was narrower than the Afrikaans-speaking white group as a whole. The latter included a large number of traditional Smuts-supporting families, many of whom, notwithstanding the definitions imposed by the ethnic entrepreneurs, regarded themselves as just as "*ware*" (true) Afrikaners as anyone else. When Smuts took South Africa into the Second World War on the side of Britain and her allies, the cleavage between the United Party and Nationalist Party Afrikaners deepened considerably, leading to open antagonisms even within families.

Dunbar Moodie (1975) took the ideologized positions of the intellectual core and ethnic entrepreneurs of the Nationalist Party as the basis for his conception of an Afrikaner "*civil religion*" (see ahead) but as Giliomee notes, the ordinary rank and file Afrikaners were not necessarily captive to this subtle and variable, but powerful form of boundary formation (Giliomee, 1979: 113).

It is important to understand the commitments of the formally secret, but in fact semi-secret *Afrikaner Broederbond*, because it represented a very specific form of ethnic mobilisation; a planned and systematic attempt to define the nature and boundaries of an ethnic group and to promote its status and interests. The basis for this analysis is the book by J.H.P. Serfontein, a journalist hostile to the Broederbond who spent many years accumulating secret documentation and, at some personal risk, published his expose of the organisation in 1979 (Serfontein, 1979). Serfontein describes the motivation to establish the Broederbond at the founding meeting in June 1918 as the

*"... bringing together ("verbroedering") of the Afrikaners who are at present spread over the whole of South Africa and are largely opposed to each other, without the least cohesive power." (p32)*

He goes on to describe the self-confessed aims of the movement as

*"The welding together of Afrikaners ... towards uniformity of purpose, the interests of Afrikaners must always be served, ... To carry the Afrikaner volk ... towards its sense of identity ... to cultivate love for his language, history, land, volk and law, ... pure original South African culture and art must be promoted ... The society must be refined/ purified ("veredelmoedig") with the maintenance of its old pure morals and characteristics such as hospitality, democratic conviviality, and readiness to stand by each other in bitterness or in need ... We build our future on the Rock of Christ."* (p32)

An important part of the strategy was the establishment of cells that could act to promote the interests of members in all spheres in each local situation, including job and business advancement, to establish Afrikaans schools and to assist members who sought political office. It developed into an all-pervasive network of interlocking cells and cross cutting organisations through the representation of cells on a wider regional basis.

It also proceeded to organise front organisations to interact in the public sphere, helping to organise a large "volkskongres" in 1934 on the poor white problem, the Economic Volkskongres in 1939, the Economic Institute and the Afrikaans Commercial Institute (Handelsinstituut), the establishment of an Institute for Christian National Education, the Institute for Social Welfare, and the establishment of Afrikaans workers' organisations to combat Communist and other "denationalized" interests among the workers, the Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organisations (FAK), the Reddingsdaadbond to help poor Afrikaners launch small businesses (which had 300 000 members by 1943), the Volkskas Bank, the forerunner of South Africa's largest bank today, the Voortrekkers, an Afrikaans equivalent of the Boy Scouts/Girl Guides, and many others. The Bond through the ATKKB helped to organise the powerfully effective symbolic "Trek" of 1938, which, because of the wave of sentiment which it created, Serfontein describes as the "*single most important event in the rise to power of the Afrikaners*" (p42), and which also had the effect of side-lining the established political leaders of the time, including General Hertzog himself.

Serfontein also recounts that the Bond was deeply politically divided in the earlier years with much tension between the Hertzog and Malan factions. When Malan created his purified, later the "*Herenigde*" (reunited) National Party, the way was clear for the Bond to begin to associate closely with the new Nationalist Party. Hertzog criticised this bitterly,

saying that the "...unity of Afrikanerdom was being bartered away for a Republican-cum-Calvinist Bond", and *"The purged National Party, with its purged leaders, now stands forth openly in all its racial nakedness, adorned with only one fig leaf: SECRECY."* (Serfontein, 1979: 41-42)

The Afrikaner Broederbond also had a complex and somewhat uncomfortable relationship with another ideological mass organisation well to the right of the National Party, the 400 000 strong "Ossewabrandwag" (OB), which had a fascist one-party philosophy and which supported Hitler's Germany during the war. The National Party and the Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organisations came into conflict with the OB, and while there were many prominent Broederbonders who were members of the OB, there were many others for whom the fascism of the OB and of other hyper right-wing organisations such as the "Greyshirts" was anathema. In the final instance, the Afrikaner Broederbond although striving for cohesiveness, relative ethnic exclusivity and the total segregation of the races, was not fascist or particularly authoritarian. In fact one of its characteristics was an endless debate -- at times confusion -- about specific policies and positions within its broader framework and also about the position of the minority of non-Nationalist or "SAP" sympathizers within its ranks. Right up to 1948 its political stance was diffuse, although it was united in supporting apartheid.

Two things were, however, remarkable about the Broederbond: the methodical, systematic and at times very patient way in which it developed and implemented strategies (Serfontein, p47), despite lack of clarity on goals at times, and even allowing for the strategic approach, the relatively rapid success of its campaign to attract leading Afrikaners into its ranks in the face of the sophisticated and more inclusive philosophy offered by the Smuts and Hertzog traditions of leadership -- a leadership which was certainly not lacking in legitimacy in the early struggle against British imperialism. The Broederbond, through what was an ambitious and partly-successful programme of co-ordination and mobilisation, was partly instrumental in laying the basis for the Nationalist victory in 1948, and therefore was the midwife of the emergence of a more fully-rounded and formalised Afrikaner ethnicity.

It is worth noting briefly what Afrikaner nationalism had to prevail against. After the Anglo-Boer war, Generals Botha and Smuts were primarily committed to the healing of the deep rift of antagonism between Afrikaans and English-speaking whites and reconciling the new country to the broader international capitalist liberal-conservatism of the British Commonwealth at that time. For this task they enjoyed immense credibility as former Boer generals; Smuts having been among the last to surrender to the British. This position of reconciliation was made more credible by the fact that Smuts was mistrusted and opposed from the English-speaking side by the intensely pro-British Unionists. Smuts, particularly, had the additional advantage of an exalted status within the Commonwealth and Britain, having been a British barrister, a member of the British War Cabinet in the First World War as well as having held other prestige positions in British academic life. He was, theoretically, an almost incomparable ego ideal as an Afrikaner boy (Boerseun) who made good. For the Afrikaners who adopted the reconciliatory attitude, he was a towering symbol of the new South African unity, in tune -- indeed a leading figure in -- the emerging modern international (and after the Anglo-Boer War, somewhat chastened) spirit of development and democracy. It was against the immense stature of Smuts that the Nationalists had to mobilise.

The consolidation of Afrikaner nationalism hereafter can be broadly sketched on the basis of electoral advances. In reviewing these, the major sources consulted are those of Heard (1974) and Davenport (1987). In the elections of 1910, among whites, the Botha-Smuts South African party was substantially opposed only by the harder line British "*chauvinists*" in the Unionist Party, and the SAP attracted a massive share of the votes of the then demoralised and fragmented Afrikaners. The majority of the SAP was 56 per cent in the absence of any party for the Afrikaner nationalists. By the 1915 elections General Hertzog had split from Botha and Smuts largely because of the perception that the entry of South Africa into the First World War indicated an over-riding loyalty to the British imperialist cause and formed the National Party. This new party did fairly well under the circumstances and gained 21 per cent of the (overwhelmingly white) votes, but some 40 per cent of Afrikaners were still committed to the reconciliatory "*South African*" position.

In the 1920 elections -- a time when the sharply deteriorating economy had drawn many less-skilled Afrikaner workers into the Labour Party, the National Party increased its share of the vote to 33 per cent, and significantly more Afrikaners voted "*nationalist*" than South African Party. In the 1924 elections, Hertzog and the Nationalists entered into a pact with the Labour Party which had been driven to side with Afrikaner Nationalists by the actions of Smuts in siding with mining capital in brutally suppressing the 1922 Mine-workers' rebellion, in which 230 white miners were killed. In this election the National Party took 47 per cent of the vote, indicating that some two-thirds of Afrikaners had moved to the Nationalist position, and the Pact government brought Afrikaner nationalists into executive power for the first time in the Union. This position was maintained in the 1929 elections, when the National Party won 53 per cent of the seats.

Hence, from 1915 to 1929 there was a steady consolidation of an Afrikaner Nationalist power-base to the point that well over 80 per cent of Afrikaners were voting for an ethnic cause. This ethnic cause was, however, a moderate one because the position of its leader, Hertzog, was what was termed the two-stream approach. Hertzog was committed to South African unity, like Smuts, but was less pro-English capital and was committed to raising the status and conditions of Afrikaners to a position of parity with those of the English-speakers. He was not exclusive in his nationalism. In respect of the blacks, however, he was a firmer segregationist than Smuts, and he was implicitly supported in these measures by the Labour Party, which was dominantly English-speaking.

The continuity in the trend in the consolidation of Afrikaner nationalism was broken by economic crises in the early thirties, and in response to popular demand, Hertzog and Smuts sank their differences and formed a coalition with the South African Party, which after the 1933 elections, in which the Nationalists won 50 per cent of the vote, was formalised as the new United Party. Although Hertzog within the United Party was instrumental in passing a number of fundamental segregationist measures, his association with Smuts and British-English-speaking South African business interests was too much for the more principled Nationalists, who by now were being ideologically strengthened by the

Broederbond. Hence in 1934, Dr. Malan, a Cape Nationalist, broke away from Hertzog to form the "*Purified*" National Party, later to become the "*Herenigde*" (Re-united) National Party, and the English-speaking equivalents of the purists broke away to form the Dominion Party.

Many "*moderate*" Afrikaner Nationalists remained in the Smuts-Hertzog alliance, however, and initially the new National Party was weaker than it had been before the "*fusion*", as it was called. In the 1938 election, Malan's nationalists won only some 18 per cent of the seats. Afrikaners, despite the mobilising zeal of the Broederbond, were once again disunited politically. In the meantime, Hertzog had broken away from the United Party because of Smuts' decision to enter the Second World War on the side of Britain, but he failed to be accepted back by the new Nationalists and retired from politics, while his lieutenant Havenga formed the moderate but weak Afrikaner Party.

It is important to note, however, that the divisions in Afrikaner politics at the time were wider than the differences between the South African unity position and the Nationalist position. There were also important differences in terms of militancy among Afrikaners, with the Ossewabrandwag, the Greyshirts and Oswald Pirow's New Order taking lines in broad sympathy with National Socialism. Malan, despite his intense commitments to Afrikaner unity, distanced the National Party from the more militant and extreme right wing elements, setting the stage for a coalition much later with the moderate nationalists in the Afrikaner Party.

In the 1943 election, the Nationalists strengthened their position again to take 29 per cent of the seats, up from the 18 per cent of 1938. In fact they won 33 per cent of the votes cast, which implied that they had recovered to achieve a slight majority among Afrikaners, but clearly there was still a major component of the Afrikaner ethnic constituency in the reconciliatory anti-Nationalist coalition formed by the United Party after the elections. As popular interpretations had it at the time, the "*Bloedsappe*" (Afrikaners inveterately loyal to the Smuts tradition) had not yet bugged. From now on the action was to be the struggle of

the Nationalists and to an extent the Broederbond, not always in formal alliance, to build the unity of the Afrikaner volk and to achieve political supremacy.

In 1948, that moment arrived, but the victory remained narrow. The National Party was able to exploit some important non-ethnic issues; mainly what it portrayed as United Party weakness on a United Nations and India-led campaign against policies in respect of Indians, militant protests by the African Mineworkers Union and a setback for Smuts in the United Nations rejection of his proposal to incorporate the then South West Africa into Union. The National Party had also begun to exploit the anti-Christian influence of international Communism.

The National Party, in alliance with the tiny Afrikaner Party, won 53 per cent of the seats, giving it an electoral victory, but securing only 39 per cent of the votes; the discrepancy being due to the loading of rural votes in smaller rural constituencies. Clearly this was a further advance on the 33 per cent of seats won in 1943, but Afrikaners were still divided, with 20 to 30 per cent sticking to the conciliatory "*South African*" position. In the 1953 elections the National Party won 59 per cent of the seats but only 49 per cent of the votes, which meant that more than some 15 to 20 per cent of Afrikaners were still outside the "*fold*". In the 1958 elections, however, the National Party won 55 per cent of the votes and this meant that well over eight out of ten Afrikaners had been politically incorporated into the Nationalist power base.

Then came the final political test of the unity and ethnic commitment of Afrikaners -- the Referendum on the issue of the Republic. Symbolically the achievement of a Republic would for Nationalist Afrikaners reverse the defeat in the Anglo-Boer war and finally curb the threat of English-cultural and political imperialism and political interference by the Commonwealth. The campaign for the Republic was given impetus by a prophetic "*Winds of Change*" speech made by Mr. Harold MacMillan, the British Prime Minister, in which he warned of the inevitability of political transformation for South Africa to accommodate the rising demand for black political rights, the Sharpeville and other black protests and the

imposition of a State of Emergency and the attempted assassination of Dr. Verwoerd, who had become Prime Minister in 1958.

In the referendum the yes vote for a Republic gained 52 per cent of the vote, implying that despite the controversies, the determined opposition of the United Party which exploited the reconciliatory mission of Smuts to the hilt, warnings of world opposition and even some talk of a secession by Natal, some 80 per cent or more of Afrikaners backed the Republic. The processes were set in motion to inaugurate the Republic and Dr. Verwoerd went to London to the Commonwealth Conference with an application for South Africa to remain within the Commonwealth as a Republic. An ensuing confrontation led to him withdrawing the application and returning to announce:

*"We have triumphed -- not over another country, nor over Britain, but we have freed ourselves from the pressure of the Afro-Asian nations ... we now go forward alone. We are standing on our own feet."* (quoted by Heard: 1974:118)

The Afrikaner nationalist mission had been achieved.

## **5.2 INTERPRETING THE EMERGED AFRIKANER NATIONALISM: SOME PERSPECTIVES**

The understanding of the history of Afrikaner ethnicity has been made more than unusually complex by the manifest association which has been demonstrated between ethnic commitments and the clearly associated factors of class, race, and Calvinist religion. These associations have allowed a plethora of "*one-factor*" theories to grab centre-stage in explanations of the phenomenon. Furthermore, attempts to understand the nature of the Afrikaans ethnic aspirations have also been so thoroughly obscured by a flood of either self-delusionary, contrived or tendentious self-definitions of themselves by various kinds of Afrikaner spokesmen over the period since the 1930s, that a clear conception of the phenomenon is difficult to arrive at. Degenaar (1987:231-3) notes the tendency towards mono-causality and also the tendency among Afrikaner nationalist historians to project the



modern nationalism backwards in time to earlier periods; a tendency which O'Meara describes as follows:

*"Most of it self-consciously seeks to construct political/cultural mythology. One leading author has gone so far as to claim divine appointment to this task. (referring to G.D. Scholtz, 1967) ... The result is a "diseased" national outlook ... (O'Meara, 1983:4)".*

Degenaar identifies some 26 phases or elements in the emerging make-up of Afrikaner ethnic identity -- in other words a complexity of interactions which dare not be oversimplified (Degenaar, 1987: 232-3).

Within this contested field of interpretation one has to discuss the major issues of debate, before attempting to reach some conclusions about Afrikaner history which will be useful for the present.

### 5.2.1 CLASS AS THE MAJOR DYNAMIC?

Dan O'Meara offers the most sophisticated interpretation of Afrikaner nationalism from a broadly Marxist perspective. Following Marx's well-known warnings (referred to in earlier chapters of this dissertation) he insists that the nature of Afrikaner nationalism cannot be explained in terms of the conscious meanings of the ethnic actors themselves. He criticises authors who have tended to take the subjective views of Afrikaners into account, among others Adam and Giliomee (1979), for assuming that subjective needs and the actors self-definitions are prominent in the shaping of nationalism -- what he terms an extreme form of idealism (O'Meara, 1983:8).

Yet O'Meara himself places an almost extreme final emphasis on his alternative hypothesised factor, class. He argues:

*"All ideologies provide some form of "psychological security" and emotional anchorage to those who believe in them. This tells us nothing and begs precisely the most important question -- why, and under what conditions do differentiated collectivities of people come to be organised in terms of one ideology rather than another?"*

He takes an alternative basis of explanation, one which "... seeks to go beyond such teleological and idealist circularity ..." which he clarifies as:

*"Thus the approach here seeks to explain the development of Afrikaner nationalism ... through locating Afrikaans-speakers in the context of the social relations, conditions, contradictions and struggles consequent upon capitalist accumulation in South Africa." (p12)*

This approach, admittedly, does not lead O'Meara to crude economic reductionism and the proposition that Afrikaner nationalism was a form of false consciousness and self-mystification, as it has in many other Marxist interpretations. His approach is more sophisticated in that he accepts that the experience which groups have of their conditions is real and authentic. He also accepts that Afrikaner nationalism was more than a passive response to class struggles, and that it was an active organisational and ideological form through which the class forces operated. But nevertheless, the ideology and its organised responses were based on experiences which he describes as "partial" because the reality experienced was "misrepresented" to the people who experienced it. In seeking the fuller reality he proposes that

*"... petit bourgeois groups sought to transform themselves into an industrial and commercial bourgeoisie utilising a broad set of organisational, ideological, and political means to mobilise mass support from Afrikaans speakers of other classes for this attempt." (p16)*

In other words, the intellectual leaders, proponents and grass roots supporters of the Afrikaner nationalist ideal were exposed to interpretations of the reality which were partially true to their experience but for the rest obscured the fact that they were being led up the garden path by their greedy petit bourgeois colleagues.

This explanation is plausible to the extent that it describes a widely acknowledged aspect of Afrikaner mobilisation from the thirties onwards. As has been demonstrated, the Afrikaner Broederbond -- in its menu of secret co-ordinating action, included objectives which were identical to O'Meara's description -- in fact they were among the most public of its strategies. One is tempted therefore tempted

to ask O'Meara, "*so what?*". The serious question which arises, however, is whether or not the rest of the ideology was simply a disguise for class mobilisation or whether the class objectives were part of or extensions of processes which O'Meara negates as "*idealistic*". Obviously class interests were important, but was it only, or dominantly, class? Did the individuals who became rich with the establishment of Volkskas Bank, Santam and Sanlam in some mysterious way manipulate the cream of Afrikaans intellectuals to erect a massive structure of interlocking organisations, networks and commitments, to drive divisions between powerful political leaders, and to plan massive festivals just so that they and their petit bourgeois colleagues could make a quick buck? This is what O'Meara (1983), with precise and detailed examples as evidence in his sections 6-12, is arguing:

*"Thus the analysis of this ideology must needs concentrate on the content of these struggles and not be misled by the symbolic forms in which they were cast." (p166)*

O'Meara's facts are all convincing and one may accept that both he and a core Broederbond of the time would have agreed that a major goal of the Afrikaner Christian-National economic movement was the economic empowerment of a marginalised petit bourgeoisie. Similarly one can accept his conclusions (p248 passim) that the economic movement by 1948 had moved from the co-operative mobilisation and rescue of the dispersed and alienated volk to the consolidation of Afrikaner capital. O'Meara provides more convincing evidence of these developments than most Afrikaner historiographers adduce for their positions. What then is the disagreement? It lies in what neither O'Meara or the "*idealists*" he criticises can categorically prove directly. The question raised is whether the interests and relations in the Afrikaner base production system somehow determined the framework and the critical priorities, or whether the overarching ideological and broader motivational system -- the ethnicity -- created the opportunities and the inter-class support to allow the consolidation of Afrikaner economic interests to occur, and as Moodie puts it, to allow Afrikaner capitalism to be "*subverted*" to the aims of the volk (Moodie, 1975:289). O'Meara's proposition is the more difficult to prove and it requires more than the "*exemplifications*" he

produces, because for each of those there are other quotes and events that would "prove" the contrary. One has to in fact fail to be able to demonstrate the opposite of what O'Meara infers (the null hypothesis) before one can accept his position as proven on the basis of exemplification. For the moment all one can say is, that the structural case is based on an inference from certain facts, while the idealist case is based on the acceptance that the people who articulated the interests of Afrikaner Nationalism were not all mystified, self-beguiled or sophisticated liars. The possibility of the latter, quite frankly, is absurd.

A less indirect and less conceptually structured proposition about what really happened is that the bankers and the shopkeepers and the mining magnates who emerged were in the right place, in the right group and with the right broader ideological commitments at the right time. As with black economic empowerment in South Africa today, the ideologues and trade unionists were actually proud of them because they managed to make the most of the politically and ideologically constructed opportunities.

O'Meara also does not fully answer the question he directs at Adam and Giliomee -- why one choice of ideology and not another? The nationalist enterprise, because of the scope of its mobilisation and its compelling emotive base was indeed particularly suited to the purposes of the bourgeois entrepreneurs, but the implied further part of his question, which is why nationalism has these particular advantages is not considered. Adam and Giliomee do attempt to answer precisely that with reference to "*psychological security needs*", which, as has been hypothesised in the literature in previous chapters, is not a teleological or circular factor but an independent underlying factor which is particularly well addressed by ethnic commitments. It is simply not true that any or all ideological commitments offer much the same mass appeal as ethnicity, as O'Meara suggests.

The problem with the class-based approaches to Afrikaner ethnicity and its political agenda is not that the factor of class is invalid -- on the contrary, it is very valid

indeed as a component of the phenomenon, as is clear from the brief history offered. The Marxist approaches postulate more for class than that of a component part of the explanatory action; they want, as Wolpe suggests, class as an autonomous over-riding or final force:

*"The consequence of this acceptance of the "actor's" definition of the situation ... is that the ideological and political are given a predominance such as either to obliterate differences in relations of production or to give the appearance that the political and the ideological define new relations of exploitation. In either event the economic level is deprived of any autonomy whatsoever ... whatever the nature of the conflicts or contradictions of South African capitalism, (that) there is no possibility of the white working class or any fraction of it ever entering into an alliance with African workers in a struggle to overthrow the capitalist state."* (Wolpe, 1976:215)

If non-Marxist analysis excludes the possibility of class interests being a vital and analytically independent component of ethnic formations, then it would be as tendentious as the Marxist propositions themselves. Adam and Giliomee were certainly not excluding the relevance of material interests, but as Giliomee points out:

*"An orthodox class analysis ... does not provide an adequate answer to the question of why the "purified" version of Afrikaner nationalism became a driving force in such a comparatively short time."* Giliomee, 1979: 110)

Class interests, even if there was a bourgeois conspiracy to use nationalism to create an industrial and financial powerhouse, were relatively powerless to drive and structure the process. They accompanied it and drew advantages from it but it was bigger even than they were. Max Weber's explanation of an "*elective affinity*" between structure and ideology is more easily reconcilable with the relationships between nationalism and class interests we have observed in the preceding review:

*"Ideas, selected and reintegrated from the original doctrine, do gain in affinity with the interests of certain members of special strata; if they do not gain such an affinity they are abandoned"* (Gerth and Mills, 1977:63).

Weber, furthermore, was referring not only to class interests but also to status and power.

Class interests enter the mix in the Afrikaner ethnic phenomenon in various ways. The Free Burghers in the Cape settlement were largely poor, and the migrant farmers later were very poor, living in hostile and circumstances. They were socio-economically interposed between the poorer blacks and the richer officials and bourgeoisie of the urban areas and large farms. It would have been most unusual had their socio-economic circumstances not engendered antagonism towards the pro-Dutch and thereafter pro-British establishments and had these circumstances not been a factor in the Great Trek. Still later the impoverished circumstances of the Afrikaners after the Anglo-Boer war were undoubtedly a factor inclining the poor Afrikaners, through ethnic unions, to seek protection against both the English-speaking industrialists and the black labour force which, because of its greater poverty and different community-structure and lifestyle, was able to undercut the Afrikaner's wages. The broader inequality between the English and Afrikaans communities after the turn of the century has already been referred to, and the coincidence of nationalist aspirations and Afrikaner bourgeois economic empowerment is equally obvious. Material contrasts and stresses were an obvious factor in the mix which was Afrikaner ethnicity, but to revert to Gellner in the introductory chapter, "*without ethnicity, class is blind*" -- class was not the STRUCTURING or dominant dynamic.

### 5.2.2 RACISM AS THE STRUCTURING DYNAMIC?

Race, as a factor obscuring a balanced understanding of Afrikaner ethnicity, needs little research to identify. Afrikaner nationalist politicians and political entrepreneurs have given the many thousands of people, who have labelled Afrikaner ethnicity a cover for or correlate of the racism of the apartheid era, all the ammunition they ever needed. For example, the future Prime Minister D.F. Malan's speech at the commemoration of the battle of Blood River in 1938 extols the achievements of the Afrikaner nationalist enterprise in a particular order:

*"They made their sacrifices. There is still a white race. There is a new People. There is a unique language. There is an imperishable drive to*

*freedom. There is an irrefutable ethnic destiny.*" (quoted by Neuhaus, 1986:26, my emphasis)

This author's former Professor of Sociology at the University of Pretoria, Geoff Cronje (who missed many classes because of his tireless work in the fifties in promoting the cause of Afrikaner nationalism and that of the Broederbond and the Ossewabrandwag), wrote several books on the topic which were required reading for the new nationalist political elite in Pretoria, in which he spoke almost exclusively of race, and very seldom about culture or ethnicity as an autonomous phenomenon. In his most famous book " *'n Tuiste Vir die Nageslag*" (A Haven for our Descendants) he gives his definition of the Afrikaner nation and its calling as follows

*"The Boer nation ... is rooted in this land and has arisen from this very earth, it knows the problems of this country from own experience ... South Africa is the only fatherland for the Boer nation ... it has created its culture from its own power and resources... Because the Boer nation is indigenous it is in the best position to place the interests of the country above all other considerations ... (and all this comes immediately under and elaborates on the heading): "It is historically the task and calling of the Boer nation to determine a racial policy for the country and to see to its implementation". (Cronje, 1945: 23)*

But Afrikaner nationalism and the racial interface are not quite as simple as these quotes would suggest. At issue is whether the response to race was "racist" in the sense of making the somatic and genetic factor predominant -- AN INTRINSIC RACIAL AVERSION, or whether race entered the mix as an ethnic boundary factor. Giliomee, on the basis of the archival material and reports of officials discerns three attitude sets among the colonists at around 1780 to 1810; the one a perception of cultural distinctiveness, the second being a perception of intrinsic genetic inferiority, and the third based on a "prior" claim to privileges emanating from their association with the colonial authorities (Giliomee, 1979: 93-94). The major distinction is between the first and third and the second. It is possible for race to become incorporated into an ethnic boundary-maintenance process without it necessarily being "racism" in the sense of a perception of genetic inferiority.

One can explore this possibility with what may be a rather silly hypothetical scenario. Would the responses of the Cape Free Burghers and the Trekkers been different had they encountered a technologically less-advanced people who spoke a different language, and a non-written language at that, who were non-Christian and did not cover their bodies, BUT WHO WERE WHITE-SKINNED CAUCASIANS? Unlikely: the settlers would have had the same conflicts and misunderstandings with these whites and would have stereotyped their culture as backward. Instead of a racial distance they would have developed an ethnocentric distance. The structure of the contact situations made a racially defined ethnic boundary inevitable, and since ethnic boundaries are self-reinforcing, it would have been perpetuated into the 20th century. Certainly there was a prior European tradition of somatic sensitivity to dark skins, but race can be ethnic distance in disguise. Perhaps one should not drive too fine a point, but the Afrikaner race-consciousness that emerged with his ethnicity has probably always been a mixture of the racism and race-based ethnicity as described above. Theories of ethnicity have not reached consensus on whether race and ethnicity are both phenomena of a type or whether they have to be approached as conceptually distinct phenomena. Sandra Wallman (1988:229) makes the persuasive point that

*"Once it is clear that ethnic relations follow on the social construction of difference, phenotype (race) falls into place as one element in the repertoire of ethnic boundary markers."*

Degenaar (1987: section 8.3) points to the possibility that the kind of nationalism which was emerging -- a "*volksnasionisme*" (translation difficult but broadly a "*folk-nationalism*") inclines the self-definitions involved to intensely felt exclusiveness, which is closely consonant with rigid social closure and the stereotyping of outsiders. Hence while one accepts on the basis of overwhelming evidence that Afrikaner nationalism is steeped in race-stereotypy, one does not necessarily have to accept that all of the patterns are equivalent to racism, because they arise primarily from the Afrikaners definition of himself more than from the definition of the excluded other.



That there is a dimension of extreme racism within the mix is also clearly evident. What is particularly interesting is the tendency among some nationalist ideologues to use the conception of white purity as a basis for excluding other whites who do not share the concept -- in other words race attitudes as a boundary marker. The prominent Afrikaner nationalist historian, D.J. Kotze, defines the nationalist conception of the state as, inter-alia:

*"... each nation should rule itself ... (and) Until such a dispensation is established in South Africa, the Afrikaner together with other worthy whites must retain the power of the state."* (Kotze, 1968:54)

Hence, for some of those involved in boundary maintenance, the attitude to race was a principle of exclusion or inclusion.

As the hegemony of the nationalist cause was to progress later, even the authoritarian and highly directive Verwoerd, who had built his career on his championship of an exclusive ethnic cause, after the victory of the Republic in the 1960 referendum, was able to offer the English junior partnership in the enterprise:

*"Patriotism, fellow citizenship, friendship, all have become of more importance to us. The English-speaking and the Afrikaans-speaking sections have become like the new bride and bridegroom who enter upon the new life in love to create together and to live together as life-mates."* (quoted by Moodie, 1975:285-6)

This is hardly the stuff of ethnic exclusion, and the key is the wider ethnic boundary -- race. With the ghost of British Imperialism and with it the threat of liberalism finally laid to rest, an ambiguity of boundary processes becomes evident; the boundary widens to allow associate membership up to the cutting point of race.

### 5.2.3 CALVINISM AS THE STRUCTURING DYNAMIC?

The Chairman of the Broederbond in the thirties described the mission of the Bond as follows:

*"The Afrikaner Broederbond has been born in the deep conviction that the Afrikaner people have been planted in this land through the hand of God*

*with the destiny to survive as a separate people with their own mission."*  
(quoted by Degenaar, p243)

D.F. Malan, in the same 1938 speech quoted earlier, gave an interpretation of Afrikaners which came very close to the notion of "*chosen people*", which had become a fairly familiar sentiment among sections of the Afrikaner nationalist core elite of the period:

*"The history of the Afrikaner reveals a determination and definiteness of purpose which makes one feel that Afrikanerdom is not the work of man but a creation of God. We have a divine right to be Afrikaners. Our history is the highest work of the centuries."* (quoted by Neuhaus, 1986:25)

(Malan, however, later denied that he intended to suggest that the Afrikaners were an uniquely chosen people, but he would not have denied the resonance of Calvinism within the collective mind-set of Afrikaner leadership.)

The interaction between religious ideas and the development of the Afrikaner "*people's nationalism*" is a very complex. Some aspects are simple and self-evident. Degenaar (p241) reminds us that many European nationalisms have been enmeshed in religious doctrines. Then there is the fact that for the settlers in the Cape, and the Trekkers, the church was the only institution with any resources in their civil society distinct from the colonial authorities, and their membership of the church was one of the most important aspects of the race-ethnic boundary. It can probably be accepted that their Protestant identity was for a long time firmer than their cultural identity, laying the basis for what may be termed a "*volkskerk*" dynamic at the heart of their ethnicity.<sup>3</sup>

But as time progressed the religious influences became more specific and complex. Moodie (1975) has made the premier analysis, as a basis for his thesis, that the Afrikaner ethnic cause took the form of a "*civil religion*". Unlike some popular stereotypes, which saw an undifferentiated traditional religiosity as somehow bound

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<sup>3</sup> It needs to be noted that the volkskerk notion derives from the nature of the affiliation -- the DRC did not define itself as such.

up with anti-modern tendencies among Afrikaners. Moodie distinguishes between various doctrinal influences. Interpreting broadly from Moodie, other writers like Hanekom (1951) and my own family exposure to the Dutch Reformed Church, the broadest orientation is that the "*Volkskerk*" was an institution separate from the state, and later to an extent even at least semi-independent of Broederbond pressure. The position, which was clearest in the larger NG Kerk, and was also evident in the northern breakaway Hervormde Kerk, was fundamentally intertwined with a broad Afrikaner consciousness. The Hervormde Kerk adopted a more conservative and ideological social and political stance. The larger NG Kerk had also been influenced by the more evangelical and pietistic Scottish Calvinist ministers brought in by the British and an evangelical tradition that emerged in the Netherlands itself, as well as by the more liberal Cape tradition. This evangelical influence emphasised the experience of faith, and provided a basis for less emphasis on religious ethnicity and hence potentially for a more inclusive "*liberal*" theology. In the Hervormde Kerk the liberal theology was constrained by a highly conservative political ideology, and an explicitly ethnic theology.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast to this were the influences emanating from the doctrines of Abraham Kuyper, the Dutch Calvinist theologian and later Prime Minister, which found a focus in the third division in Afrikaner Calvinism, the Gereformeerde Kerk (Doppers). Kuyperian Calvinism inculcated the duty, delegated directly from God, to exercise individual conscience and to take individual responsibility for actions within the separate sphere of community, work and government, but subject to the final sovereignty of God, Whose intentions have to be actively interpreted in everyday life. The Kuyperian vision is one which Moodie describes as "*collective individualism*" and it is consonant with democracy and fundamental equality of all in the community of the Almighty. It formed the philosophical underpinnings of a more religiously activist and committed stance by the church in politics and

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<sup>4</sup> In the largest church, the Dutch Reformed Church, the issue of race was controversial for a long time, and the church only formally segregated its structures (mother church and racially separate mission churches) under pressure from influences from the frontier regions. Later this "separate but equal" philosophy helped to structure government policy and Christian-national education.

strengthened the volks-tradition by providing a powerful coinciding doctrinal principle, which also strengthened the principle of "*self-determination*" (Volksnasionisme). This vision implied doctrinal boundaries to the ethnic group rather than race as such, but obviously the doctrine divided Calvinist Afrikaners from largely non-Calvinist and non-Christian blacks as much as it would divide them, and did divide them, from white non-Calvinists in South Africa and Catholics in the Netherlands. Much later, in the sixties, the commitment to Calvinist doctrinal principle was to impel many Gereformeerde intellectuals to question Apartheid while maintaining a conservative theological position.

In the 20th century, in contrast to all three Reformed influences, both German Romanticist and more authoritarian, dogmatic and potentially atheist National-Socialist influences entered the mix. Moodie refers to the "*neo-Fichteian*" influence, seen in leaders such as Nico Diederichs, the earlier Verwoerd (born in the then Rhodesia of Dutch, not Afrikaans parents) and others who studied in Germany. This thinking reduced the importance of religious conviction in relation to a purer emphasis on an organic "*volk*" and its intrinsic mission. It strengthened the more militant nationalists in the National Party and Broederbond themselves. The National Socialist ideology influenced the Ossewabrandwag, political activists like Hans van Rensburg, Oswald Pirow and the "*Greyshirts*" movement. My interpretation of events in the fifties was that the NG and Gereformeerde Calvinist traditions, however, acted as a bulwark against the spread of fascist ideology of this type. They most certainly prevented any widespread anti-semitism from developing and there were prominent "*insider*" Jewish businessmen interacting with the local Afrikaans Nationalist leadership in the forties, fifties and sixties in Pretoria and elsewhere. Catholics were more problematic for the Calvinist Nationalists during this period, however, and an anti-Catholic sentiment was one of the most marked features of Transvaal Nationalism.

These different influences are less prominent today, but in the late emergence of Afrikaner nationalism in the thirties, forties and fifties, they were still an informing

influence in the strands of ethnic and political ideology of the time. Furthermore, there had been mutual influence between the three sister churches, thus reducing the doctrinal differences quite substantially. There was, thus, some notion, not necessarily of being the elect of God, but at least of being accountable to transcendent authority. Most importantly, the influence of the various strands of Calvinism was to provide a moral and intellectual confidence to the leadership.

#### 5.2.4 A COMPOUND PROCESS

As the earlier chapters have argued, the concepts of ethnicity and nationalism have to allow for the combined effects of various levels of interest, motivation, moral commitment, rationalisation, organisation and boundary formation within the phenomena. The emergence of Afrikaner ethnicity has to be understood as a compound process, but one in which a "*dialectic*", to quote Degenaar (p252), exists between powerful elements, each one of which offers itself as the basis for grasping the phenomenon, but not one of which is sufficient in itself.

Afrikaner Nationalism was also a process of crystallisation, and as Giliomee (1984:41) reminds us, it was only after the Anglo-Boer war and the full entry of Afrikaners into a situation of divided pluralistic politics and economic interaction, in which positions had to be taken and distinctions formalised, that a definite national consciousness developed, and which was then projected backwards onto the strands of influence which produced the ethnic consciousness: "*... a nation necessarily creates its own history*" (Degenaar, 1987:233).

A process of interacting elements with rationalisations and myths often constructed after the events, suggests that Afrikaner nationalism was amorphous, but this would not be accurate. The crystallisation of these elements into a cohesive whole leads to what Giliomee, following Blumer (1964) has also described as a "*sense of group position*", and with it a consciousness which I have argued feeds back into very basic needs for identity, status and reassurance. Calvinism, class, power, ethnic

entrepreneurship all gave content and structure, but the Afrikaners cannot be argued to be anything other than primarily an ethnic group. But the brief history outlined indicates the possibility of some characteristics relevant to its responses to current conditions and likely future persistence. These will be drawn together in the final chapter.

### **5.3 THE HEYDAY OF AFRIKANER STATE NATIONALISM: DOMINANCE, DIVERSIFICATION AND DIVISION**

The 1958 election and the 1960 referendum campaigns were fought on an ethnic basis focused on race. An editorial in the Nationalist Party mouthpiece *Die Transvaler* put it very succinctly:

*"The tribal drum beats for every 'rasegte' person ... the National Party causes a voice to be heard that its people trust -- the voice of the good shepherd who knows his own and whom his own know."* (quoted by Schlemmer, 1987: 53)

After the nationalist victory in the 1960 referendum the prospects of the alternative pole to Nationalism ever being able to threaten Afrikaner ethnic interests declined rapidly. During the preceding period education at all levels had been segregated, the principle of mother tongue education deeply entrenched and the language of the public service, although nominally bilingual, had shifted to a primary position for Afrikaans. A number of symbolic place names had been changed to Afrikaans as well. Virtually all public service provision and public amenities had been formally segregated. The formidable Dr. Verwoerd had become Prime Minister in 1958 and even most opposition MPs acknowledged his intellectual strength (see Davenport, 1987: chapters 14 and 15).

Furthermore, Verwoerd's policy of granting independence to the African "*Homelands*" had contributed substantially to splitting the opposition, because a group of eleven United Party MPs had split off from the official opposition in 1959 to form the Progressive Party, partly because the United Party had opposed the granting of more land for the Homelands. The formerly centrist Party of Smuts and Hertzog began a decline in fortunes.

Black politics had moved to centre stage as the critical threat to the new position of dominance of Afrikaners. The ANC's Congress of the People at which the Freedom Charter was signed in 1955 had been preceded by rural rebellion and then by the ANC's urban "Defiance Campaign". The Sharpeville massacre was to follow, and for South Africans and for the world at large, the ethnic struggle of the Afrikaners was almost totally eclipsed by the new dynamic. Most importantly for Afrikaner Nationalism, it meant that white unity became much more salient, and more and more conservative English-speakers began to identify in political terms with the Nationalist Party, which accordingly went from strength to strength electorally. The proportion of seats won by the National Party increased as follows, as recorded by Kapp (1987:6):

1953: 60%  
 1958: 66%  
 1961: 67%  
 1966: 76%  
 1970: 71%  
 1974: 72%  
 1977: 82%

Obviously these percentages meant that from 1958 English-speakers began to support the National Party in large numbers -- this author's own calculations at the time of the 1966 election were that over 30 per cent of English-speakers who participated voted Nationalist in that election; a proportion which was due to increase yet further. The basis of this solidarity was probably racial, and it was facilitated by the fact that the National Party in government had begun to allay the cultural fears of English-speakers from the 1961 referendum victory onwards.

As the historian Kapp puts it

*"... status and cultural factors were the most powerful in attaching Afrikaner votes to the National Party and in arousing enthusiasm for it. The post-1961 period saw a marked decline in the salience of these two issues. The National Party now became the champion of national unity and co-operation between the two white groups in the belief that a genuine Republican loyalty and patriotism could be generated once the status of both the Afrikaner and English-speaking communities had been assured. Dr Verwoerd and his successor, B.J. Vorster went out of their way to cultivate English-speaking support." (Kapp, 1987:17)*

Although this pattern of rapprochement ("toenadering") had a setback in the 1970 elections, the major division in South African politics and society was now more than ever before, the issue of race and the rights of "non-whites".

Afrikaner culture had become institutionalised and the state assumed responsibility for its custodianship. Afrikaners retained ethnic consciousness and commitments, but could make the comfortable assumption that as long as a white government was in power, their superior numbers among white voters (roughly 60 per cent) and the fact that the English-speakers shared their most basic interests as fellow members of a dominantly middle-class racial oligarchy, the need for cultural and ethnic mobilisation had passed. Hence the ethnicity of the Afrikaner became an increasingly latent factor.

The electoral complacency of the Nationalist Party was, however, due to be threatened by dissent from very conservative Afrikaners, not in terms of cultural commitments but in terms of racial policy. In 1969, after a messy dismissal of three Nationalist Party MPs, one of whom was Dr. Albert Hertzog, son the great General Hertzog, the *Herstigte (restored) Nasionale Party* (HNP) was formed. The split was only partly cultural, and in the main it was due to the fact that the *Herstigtes* objected to very limited cosmetic and pragmatic race reforms because they saw apartheid "... as a self-contained system that had to be defended in its totality, as Verwoerd had envisaged it" (Davenport, 1987:424). Despite great political heat generated by the breakaway movement, the Afrikaner Broederbond supported the Prime Minister to the hilt, and the new HNP was never able to win a seat in Parliament, except for one seat as a result of a by-election victory handed to it in an electoral agreement with the Conservative Party much later.

The worst was yet to come from the right wing, however. In the late seventies and early eighties the National Party shifted its basic policy positions on race quite substantially and in fact, without acknowledging it, moved towards the policy position which had been advocated by the United Party at the end of its existence -- a policy of so-called "*Race Federation*". These shifts were accompanied by the increasing prominence of technocratic



approaches to government -- a major break with the older tradition of ideologically-based policy. A major concession to the reality of an integrated economy in the common areas of the country had been to recognise the permanence of non-homeland blacks in the cities and towns, leading to the establishment of black local authorities which enjoyed a measure of joint decision-making with white authorities on Regional Services Councils. Major reforms in regional planning and development policy also recognised the interdependence of black and white areas. At the social level segregation in theatres, restaurants and amenities was abolished by government. The prohibition on mixed marriages and sexual mixing was abolished and private schools and state universities were allowed to integrate their student bodies. The principle of political self-determination and a dominant power position for whites was firmly retained, but in the framework of the unacknowledged "*race federation*" principle of the need for joint and overarching mechanisms to ensure participation by all races in major development policy. These reforms were far-reaching at the time, and although change activists labelled them co-optive and the reforms "*repressive*", each one created precedents for further reform.

In 1982, former members of the National Party, who had been excluded from its ranks due to an earlier propaganda scandal involving the covert misuse of State funds to promote the National Party, and a group under Dr. Andries Treurnicht within the party, began mobilising against the reforms in the areas of race policy and particularly the policy to create two additional houses of Parliament, with lesser powers, for coloured people and Indians (there had been proposals for the incorporation of back representation into an overarching essentially consultative body but this was so firmly rejected by blacks that it was not pursued). After Treurnicht's dismissal from the party in a period of high drama, the *Conservative Party* was formed in March 1982, led by Dr. Andries Treurnicht. Soon after its establishment it established itself as a potential threat to the National Party, particularly in the Northern Transvaal, where it won a critical by-election in its leader's constituency.

The Conservative Party advocated a very clear alternative to the race "*federation*" of the National Party:

*"Partition is the only key to a stable and peaceful future for all the nations of Southern Africa. Partition is the Conservative policy which will ensure that the Afrikaner people together with those English-speakers who wish to associate themselves with the Afrikaners ... will be ruled by their people alone."* (quoted by Bekker and Grobbelaar, 1987: 73: my emphasis).

The emergence of the Conservative Party was also accompanied by a widening division in the Dutch Reformed Churches. The larger NG Kerk, after a Commission of Enquiry into the theological foundations of apartheid in 1987, published an official church document called *Church and Society* (Kerk en Samelewing) which distanced it from the apartheid principle. The smaller Hervormde Kerk, however, remained publicly committed to racial exclusivity, along with a breakaway NG church called the Afrikaner Protestant Church and a few smaller movements, all providing a religious home for right-wing Afrikaners (see Bekker and Grobbelaar, 1987: 76). A Market and Opinion Surveys poll in October 1987 showed the polarisation which was taking place in the Afrikaans churches:

<b>Table 1</b> <b>CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTY ADHERENCE:</b> <b>M&amp;O POLL, OCTOBER 1987: N1692</b> <b>AFRIKAANS CHURCH AFFILIATION</b>				
	<b>NG</b>	<b>Gereformeerde</b>	<b>Hervormde</b>	<b>Apostolic</b>
NP	51%	67%	37%	50%
CP	29%	17%	42%	31%
HNP	3%	3%	8%	2%
Balance to 100% other parties or no choice				

The association given above is more complex than a simple doctrinal division. In a M&O special survey in late 1982/early 1983, the respondents were classified in terms of high, medium or low religiosity in terms of frequency of church attendance and bible reading at home. The proportions classified as highly religious were as follows:

GEREFORMEERDE CHURCH:   64%

NG CHURCH:	50%
HERVORMDE CHURCH:	35%

The pattern above would suggest that the Hervormde church affiliation was tending to become more political than religious in motivation. It is also important to note, however, that the median monthly incomes of NP and CP supporters were at that time hardly distinguishable: NP R1389, CP R1468. The division between the two parties was most certainly not along class lines in the period of the split.

The critical issues in this division were not overtly cultural or ethnic in the sense of relating to Afrikaner identity; rather they centred on a conflict between the principle of the maintenance of rigid racial divisions on the one hand and reforms in race policy which although far from the minimum required by black interests, had the potential to lead to forms of joint multi-racial political participation and hence carried the danger of weakening "white" self-determination. As Afrikaner nationalism had become institutionalised within the policy of Apartheid, its full aims and objectives were in fact an automatic consequence of white domination and as such it was underwritten by white, not specifically Afrikaner domination. In this sense the Conservative Party's agenda was in fact a latent Afrikaner nationalist agenda. Another way of putting this is to say that Afrikaners, because of their ethnic interests, had a greater "stake" in white domination than the English-speakers, and this was the basis for the Conservative Party's reactionary opposition to constitutional reform. This reaction was not a new extremism -- the CP was caught in a time warp. They were applying exactly the same criteria of evaluation in politics as the National Party had ten to fifteen years earlier -- a good Afrikaner was supposed to have the correct race attitudes, as well as the right religious persuasion and sense of history (as well as language loyalty, obviously). The correct race attitudes were an ethnic boundary marker. This was the ethnic reality that the Conservative Party attempted to revive.

It is of interest, therefore, to review the progress of the Conservative Party in opposition. In the 1987 election it won 22 seats in Parliament, reducing the National party's proportion of seats from the 80 per cent it had achieved in 1981 to 74 per cent.

In the 1981 elections the CP/HNP share of the vote was 15,5 per cent, which increased to 29,9 per cent in 1987 and to 31,6 per cent in 1989 (quoted by Gröbbelaar, 1991: 210). A series of opinion surveys by *Market and Opinion Surveys*,<sup>5</sup> which yielded election predictions which were usually very close to results of election outcomes, allow the extent of Afrikaner support for the CP and the tiny right wing HNP to be traced over time -- the CP and the HNP are grouped together because they both reflect a core Afrikaner "*ethnic*" vote in the sense described above.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 2**  
**VOTING PREFERENCES OF AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING WHITE**  
**VOTERS: M&O SURVEYS (N circa 1100-1200)**

	Left of NP	NP	Right of NP (CP, HNP)
April 1982	6%	55%	29%
July 1982	6%	56%	24%
October 1984	7%	60%	20%
June 1986	5%	61%	22%
August 1987	9%	52%	35%
November 1988	6%	55%	36%
The percentages do not sum to 100% because non-choices and non-responses are not presented.			

<sup>5</sup> *Market and Opinion Surveys* used a representative probability postal panel of 1800 to 2000 whites (and others not included here) which obtained very high response rates because panellists were entitled to free subscriptions of any English or Afrikaans magazines of their choice.

<sup>6</sup> The parties to the "left" of the NP included the Progressive Party or its later equivalents and the successor parties to the United Party which were left of the NP only inasmuch as they were somewhat more pragmatic in respect of race policies but far from liberal.

The results on the table above show that the core ethnic position started at nearly one-third among Afrikaners soon after the establishment of the CP, then dropped to one-fifth by 1984 to 1986. As the pace of reform in race policy and the prospects of negotiations with black political movements drew closer in 1987 and 1988, the support among Afrikaners for the right wing parties, mainly the CP, increased sharply to well over one third, and to majorities in the northern and north-eastern parts of the country. (In this period English-speaking support for the NP varied between 25 per cent and 40 per cent and for the right-wing parties between 3 and 8 per cent.)

Hence, although Afrikaners were hotly divided on race issues which reflected an underlying ethnic agenda, the majority were clearly pragmatic and willing to countenance reform in race policy without sacrificing self-determination, and in that commitment they were in company with a substantial minority of English-speaking whites. Just how polarised the NP and the CP supporters were on a critical issues of race is evident from the results of another M&O poll, conducted in April 1985, in which party supporters were asked whether they would support a "*unitary state*" in which all races enjoyed participation within the same system, a compromise or "*consociational*" alternative in which race-based self-determination within a joint dispensation would be achieved, or a "*partition model*" in which total political separation of the races was maintained. The results were as follows, the PFP below is the Progressive Federal Party, the NRP is the New Republic Party, successor to the United Party:

<b>Table 3</b> <b>POLITICAL MODELS FOR SOUTH AFRICA:</b> <b>RESULTS OF AN M&amp;O POLL OF APRIL 1985, ALL VOTERS (N 1678):</b> <b>SUPPORT GROUPS</b>					
	<b>PFP</b>	<b>NP</b>	<b>NRP</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>HNP</b>
Unitary Model	78%	29%	16%	3%	9%
Compromise Model	18%	59%	73%	23%	6%
Partition Model	3%	11%	7%	73%	83%

Other/No Info	1%	1%	4%	1%	2%
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Other Market and Opinion Research Polls showed the same degree of polarisation on all specific issues of race policy and segregation. The National Party by the mid-eighties had moved to the left of what the older Hertzog position had been when Malan split away to form the purified National Party partly on issues of race and ethnic principle, and the Malan position, as specified in more formal detail by Verwoerd, had been broadly adopted by the CP and the HNP.

The Broederbond had in the period of the seventies and eighties started to take its lead from the National Party rather than giving the lead to the party. Hanf et al (1981:97), on the basis of interviews with Afrikaner political elites, came to the conclusion that by the mid seventies the Bond had become an "*instrument of the NP*" and as such had to relinquish its emphasis on the exclusive interests of Afrikaners. In fact, this author's understanding is that Dr. Verwoerd's political and intellectual stature and influence had in a sense broken the autonomy on the Broederbond. As a consequence of this there was also a split in the Broederbond in 1984, and a new organisation, the *Afrikaner Volkswag* was established with a view to pursuing exclusive Afrikaner ethnic and race commitments. An M&O poll in July 1984 revealed that only 17 per cent of Afrikaners saw a need for the Volkswag; 5 per cent among NP supporters, and 63 per cent among CP supporters. Most Afrikaners with the exception of the CP supporters saw the Volkswag as a disguised political organisation, and hence its fortunes followed those of the CP.

The Conservative Party and before it the HNP were never really able to appeal to Afrikaner ethnic concerns, separate from the political system into which these concerns and interests had become absorbed. This was mainly because they fought their campaigns around race policy and were unable to make their latent agenda clear.

This view may seem to avoid the obvious impression that the dynamic was in fact one of race with an ethnic colouring rather than the interpretation given above. One might forgive

any black person who sees this kind of question as offensive hair-splitting. Yet if we are to understand the phenomenon of ethnic reaction among Afrikaners, attention to the nuances is essential. Janis Grobbelaar (1991), in an exhaustive treatise on the right wing Afrikaner movement, for the most part does not attempt to disentangle the issues of race and ethnic ideology, but in her final conclusions she draws on the earlier religious principle of a belief in a divinely-ordained "*volkeverskeidenheid*" (ethnic variety) as a core aspect of the right wing ideology (p347). Earlier she quotes C.J. Jooste, one of the prominent right-wing ideological spokesmen, the Director of the then South African Bureau of Racial Affairs: "*The Afrikaner has since his earliest existence tried to share his country with unassimilable strangers ... in large numbers ...*" (Grobbelaar, 1991: 326). The conservative English-speakers were accepted by the CP as assimilable, but the Africans and other groups of colour were not assimilable, by virtue of their large numbers as well as due to any assumed racial characteristics. Here again this, in a very broad sense, is racism at work, but in the context of this analysis we arrive once again at race as an element in ethnic boundary formation.

#### 5.4 AFRIKANER ETHNIC MOBILISATION IN THE NINETIES

The largest challenges to the Afrikaner ethnic "*project*", and the most interesting test of its reactions in the political environment, have arisen in the long-delayed transition to majority rule in South Africa. The broader dynamics of this transition are a fascinating topic, but they belong to another analysis -- this dissertation, already uncomfortably long, is not about the entire South African political economy but about a subset of the dynamics: the role and reactions of Afrikaner nationalism and minority consciousness within the broader patterns of change.

Under pressure from a variety of sources, including economic sanctions and a range of other international pressures, and most especially a chronic balance of payments problem, which was placing a ceiling on economic growth in the country, from at least 1986 onward, the power elite in the National Party and the Broederbond had been considering ways of

engaging non-communist elements of the ANC in negotiations. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and South Africa's participation in the settlement in Namibia, impediments to negotiation were eased and the rest is history. After the signal event of the release from prison of Nelson Mandela and the un-banning of the ANC and other liberation movements in 1990, there was in fact no alternative but to begin negotiations, which proceeded relatively rapidly from then onwards.

In this process the National Party inevitably positioned itself as a wide-spectrum party. In a representative national survey conducted by this author in mid-1992, with fieldwork by Market and Opinion Surveys, the support bases of the various political parties appeared as follows:

<b>Table 4</b> <b>SUPPORT BASE OF POLITICAL PARTIES AMONG WHITES</b> <b>IN MID-1992: M&amp;O SURVEYS WHITE SUB-SAMPLE: N 1665</b>			
	<b>Nationalist Party</b>	<b>Democratic Party</b>	<b>Right-Wing (CP/AWB/HNP)</b>
<b>Home Language</b>			
Afrikaans	53%	15%	88%
English	46%	83%	12%
Other	1%	2%	-
<b>Household Income</b>			
<R2000 p.m.	20%	8%	35%
R2000 - R2999	15%	12%	15%
R3000 - R3999	13%	13%	15%
R4000 - R4999	11%	8%	11%
R5000 - R7499	16%	20%	9%
R7500 - R9999	8%	12%	3%
R10000 plus	8%	11%	3%

Hence, as the transition to majority rule began, the National Party was indeed in its base composition a centre-party, between the more reform-oriented and traditionally anti-apartheid Democratic Party and the Conservative and other right wing parties which were



clearly very dominantly Afrikaans in their support base. The National Party was almost evenly balanced between English and Afrikaans-speakers although the upper middle-class English-speakers tended towards the Democratic Party.

The results according to income show much less polarisation than one might have expected. While it is clear that the poorer whites tended to be less inclined to support the centre and reform positions, there was no crystallised class tendency in the responses. Political culture, ethnic factors and class interests were interacting in complex ways in white politics.

What is most important in these results is that the National Party could not afford to pursue an Afrikaans nationalist agenda in the negotiations and nor could it take the side of either poorer or richer whites. It had to be comprehensive in its positioning. It had in fact become the old South African Party of Smuts that it had fought so bitterly decades before, and was in effect no longer an ethnic party. The ethnic factor was represented by the right-wing in white politics.

When the government in 1989 started actively planning the transition from white political control, the reactions among right-wing and conservative Afrikaners seemed serious and substantial. The breakaway movement from the Broederbond, the Afrikaner Volkswag, committed itself to the establishment of a "*Volkstaat*" and claimed a membership of 50 000. The Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement) AWB, under the aggressive leadership of the melodramatic Eugene Terreblanche, the HNP and a party called the Boerestaat Party started working for the establishment of a "*front*" to oppose the government initiatives, and called upon the Conservative Party to resign from seats in Parliament to force by-elections throughout the country. They tried to plan a national "*General Election*" organised by Afrikaner movements to demonstrate Afrikaner opposition to the negotiation moves by government.

As has already been indicated, in the general Election of September 1989, the Conservative Party gained nearly 700 000 votes, well over one-third of the Afrikaans voter turnout. Later

in the same year it defeated the National Party in a by-election in a very safe National Party seat in Durban, far away from the core areas of Afrikaner political culture, and observers noted a 23 per cent swing away from the National Party. The Conservative Party held a "*Volksvergadering*" (People's meeting) at the Voortrekker monument which attracted a crowd of up to 100 000 supporters.

In addition, more than a dozen instances of local white vigilantism, murders and attacks on Blacks and general dissidence occurred, spearheaded by an organisation calling itself the "*Wit Wolwe*" (White Wolves), but spreading to a few other militant splinter movements as well. This pattern continued through 1990 after the release in February of Nelson Mandela and the commencement of negotiations between the government and the ANC in earnest (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990: 215-262 *passim*).

In 1991, the Conservative Party, the HNP and a number of other organisations took out advertisements condemning the now established negotiations in the strongest terms. The AWB in 1990 warned that the "*forces of the Afrikaner people would be difficult to control*" (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990: 21) and indicated that it had commenced paramilitary training for some thousands of its members. Two paramilitary units, the "*Boerekommando*" and the "*Wenkommando*" were formed. In 1991 the AWB announced that the time had come for the Afrikaners to "*prepare for war*" (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1992: 1.) This author at the time, on the basis of opinion survey trends, estimated that the militant AWB had between 50 000 to 70 000 committed supporters, and some 300 000 passive supporters, the latter figure comprising some 15 to 20 per cent of the Afrikaans electorate.

The same texture of events and statements continued during 1992 and 1993, broadening to include attacks on black school buildings. Various right wing organisations under the leadership of the Boerestaat Party announced their intention to mobilise to establish a "*Volksraad*" (People's Assembly) in Pretoria as an alternative to the government. In the run-up to and during the first democratic elections in 1994, the dissidence intensified, with 32 right-wingers arrested for sabotage and conspiracy, revealing that plans had been made to

blow up the Johannesburg International Airport in order to disrupt the elections. Twenty-five members of the AWB were arrested on 96 counts of sabotage and bombings. Dr. Johan Steenkamp of the National Party drew attention to a 16-page "War Plan" of the AWB, and the preparation of mass graves for blacks was suspected.

All this may have seemed like the beginnings of general resistance, but reactions among extreme groups always tend to suggest more than they represent on the ground. In March 1992, a general referendum among whites was held in which the government sought to establish the extent of support which its negotiation initiatives enjoyed. The question asked in the referendum was:

*"Do you support the continuation of the reform process which the State President began on 2 February 1990 and which is aimed at a new constitution through negotiation?"*

The government obtained a 69 per cent endorsement of its initiatives from whites, which represented very narrow but nonetheless significant majority support among Afrikaners. Only in one region of the country, the far Northern Transvaal, was there a majority no vote (57 per cent) (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993: 419). The opinion poll conducted by this author in mid-1992 enquired into the responses to the referendum by language and party, and the results are given in the table below:

<div>Table 5</div> <div>SUPPPORT PATTERNS IN THE MARCH 1992 REFERENDUM ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ANC: NATIONAL SURVEY FOR AUTHOR BY M&amp;O SURVEYS: WHITE SUB-SAMPLE: N1665</div>					
Referendum	Nationalist Party	Democratic Party	Right- Wing	Afrikaans	English
Voted Yes	79%	84%	4%	45%	73%
Voted No	4%	3%	83%	41%	8%
Didn't vote	11%	11%	10%	9%	13%

Other results of the 1992 opinion survey amplify the conclusions which can be drawn from the voting patterns in the referendum. Respondents were asked: *"The government is negotiating with the ANC and other political groups. This could lead to a parliament representing all people, Africans included, with a lesser or greater degree of protection for whites and other minorities."* Responses were sought in terms of the categories outlined in the table below:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Table 6</b>  <b>REACTIONS OF AFRIKANERS AND OTHER WHITES</b>  <b>TO THE PROSPECTS OF AN OPEN DEMOCRACY WITH MORE</b>  <b>OR LESS PROTECTION FOR MINORITIES: 1992</b></p>				
	<b>Afrikaners</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>NP</b>	<b>Right-Wing</b>
Welcome the new system	4,9%	14.4%	11.6%	0,0%
Accept the new system	16,7%	29.4%	29.7%	0,7%
Accept depending on minority powers	48,0%	49.0%	54.4%	37,4%
Not in favour of new system	16,4%	4.2%	2,6%	32,3%
Reject and oppose new system	12,1%	2.0%	0.3%	27,4%

The table suggests that only approximately one fifth of Afrikaners went into South Africa's transition with more or less unqualified acceptance of the process, compared with over 40 per cent of the English-speakers. Among the Afrikaners to the right of the National Party, sixty per cent rejected the moves; over one quarter implacably so.

Afrikaners, therefore, went into the new dispensation deeply divided, but the weight of the most respected opinion among Afrikaans professionals, academics, business leaders and most church leaders was in favour of negotiated change. As the table immediately above

shows, somewhat more than half of the Afrikaners who endorsed the negotiations in the referendum must have assumed or hoped that it would lead to a form of "power-sharing" between the white community and the emerging majority political forces under the leadership of the ANC -- a typical "consociational" arrangement, in which minority protection would have been built into the basic system of government.

The full spectrum of results in this survey led to the following broad impression of the orientation of Afrikaners and whites at the time:

*"One reaches the somewhat sobering conclusion that the overwhelming endorsement of negotiation and reform in the recent referendum was due very substantially to fears of what would happen if Mr. de Klerk lost and negotiation ceased. It was not due to any particular enthusiasm for the results of negotiation ... Popular views on the composition of an interim government, once established, is that it should contain as many political parties as possible, even including the Conservative Party. Generally very few (white) people would like to see a big party cartel between the ANC and the National Party. ... (or) to see the interim government taking control of the security forces."* (Schlemmer, 1992: 19-20)

The results in the survey made it quite clear that had Afrikaners suspected that the negotiation process would lead to the loss of executive powers in central government for the parties they supported, there would have been very little support for the shift away from white power dominance.

Furthermore, the right-wing movements had diluted their appeals, some of which were on behalf of Afrikaner ethnic survival and others were against "Communism"; the latter being a threat which had subsided in the minds of most of the white electorate with the collapse of the old Soviet Union. In the 1992 opinion poll referred to above, the largest single reason given by supporters of the right-wing parties for voting no in the referendum was the fear of "communism" - 20 per cent. (See also evidence by AWB members to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Citizen, 24 May, 1998.)

The right-wing formations became semi-consolidated for a period from May 1993 onwards, when 21 right-wing parties and organisations formed the *Afrikaner Volksfront*, calling for a Volkstaat which would be part of a confederation of states within the Republic. The

Afrikaner Volksfront in October 1993 entered into a further alliance, called the *Freedom Alliance*, with the Inkatha Freedom Party and the Administrations of three black "Homelands"; an arrangement across colour lines which few would have predicted a few years earlier. Both these alliances held discussions with the government and the ANC in attempts to sell the goal of political self-determination within a confederation. They were given audiences as part of a pacification strategy but quite obviously to judge from later developments, neither the National Party government nor the ANC wanted territorial partition of any kind because both anticipated that they would enjoy substantial support across all regions. A National Party cabinet minister and negotiator, Roelf Meyer, made a vague promise that some form of self-determination would be possible in the north-western area of the country, but this idea never led to any serious planning. Later in 1993 the AVF and the ANC held discussions in an attempt to secure an agreement on a Volkstaat, but in the end neither the National Party nor the ANC were at all enthusiastic about taking any agreement to the Parliament and to the newly established joint government-ANC Transitional Executive Council (TEC), and the Afrikaner Vryheidsfront withdrew its participation and submissions. The talks around the possibility of an agreement on a Volkstaat had the effect, however, of delaying an earlier intention to establish an Afrikaner Transitional Government in defiance of the negotiation process and the soon to be established TEC. Early in 1994 Mr. Nelson Mandela put paid to any expectations of Afrikaner self-determination when he said that any agreement before the elections was out of the question.

A Transitional Authority for Afrikaners was then established by the AVF in name, but soon afterwards one of the prominent leaders, General Constand Viljoen warned that a Volkstaat at that stage would have to be established by violence, and instead he advocated a solidarity vote in the coming open elections to demonstrate support for self-determination. It is fair to say that had someone of Viljoen's stature (he had been head of the S.A. Defence Force) advocated an act of force to establish a Volkstaat, it may have divided the army and South Africa's subsequent progress to majority rule may have been disrupted. It was indeed a turning point.

Thereafter General Viljoen established the *Freedom Front*, a party dedicated to self-determination and agreed to participate in the open elections, which in turn split the Afrikaner Volksfront. General Viljoen, in return for heading off violent confrontation, was granted a statutory body, the Volkstaat Council, to make recommendations to the new government on the establishment of a Volkstaat. The Volkstaat Council has by the time of writing run its term, made its recommendations, but with little sign of any interest in taking them seriously by either the governing ANC or the National Party. What in fact happened is that both the ANC and the National Party strung the Volkstaat movement along, using techniques of deflection which worked admirably in the fragmenting of the potential conservative Afrikaner solidarity around the issue of self-determination. Inexperienced in negotiation and in confrontational strategy, the conservative Afrikaner Movements were putty in the hands of the confident ANC and over-confident and duplicitous National Party. With the establishment of the Freedom Front, the Conservative Party lost a majority of its erstwhile support.

Meanwhile, the more extremist Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) mounted various attempts at destabilisation, including a hopelessly botched attempt to secure the territory of the homeland of Bophuthatswana against insurgency by ANC supporters, in the course of which several AWB members were killed by the Bophuthatswana army which sided with the emergent ANC. In the process, and in the course of several more attempts to foment violent resistance followed by very quick arrests by the police (the AWB was quite obviously as leaky as a sieve), the AWB became thoroughly discredited in the eyes of even right-wing Afrikaners. The same fate awaited other groups like the *Boerekommando*, *The Wit Wolwe* (white wolves) and the *Boere Republican Army*. In the process Afrikaners in the police and the army arrested and uncovered fellow Afrikaners in these extremist movements. It was a situation much akin to the action by Smuts against the Boer rebels in 1914. The effect on the confidence and psyche of right-wing Afrikaners was devastating. The energy, thrust and sense of purpose of right-wing mobilisation were dying (for more detailed accounts see S.A. Institute of Race Relations. 1994 and 1995: chapters on Political Developments). At this stage there still are a few militant right-wing activists in the

political field, but they are judiciously cautious and extremely covert. By its very nature, current conspiracy is simply not available for analysis.

One has to conclude, however, that the major reason for the apparent willingness of Afrikaners and indeed whites in general to be led into the new negotiated settlement, was their trust in the then President de Klerk to ensure that ultimate white veto rights would not be sacrificed. While orientations around the issue of strategy were deeply divided and varied, the majority of the whites would not have endorsed or accepted the situation which was to emerge. In a series of comparable opinion surveys between 1991 and mid-1993, de Kock demonstrated that "*hope for a peaceful future*" among whites declined from 56 per cent to 24 per cent over the period (de Kock, 1996:43). Although the de Kock surveys also showed that support for de Klerk fell between 1992 and 1993, de Klerk remained the dominant figure in minority politics. Frost sums up the situation very well:

*"In general the members of this group (the whites) were fearful of the consequences of democratisation and were primarily interested in safeguarding their jobs and property. It seemed to them that the best safeguards would involve complicated constitutional devices ... for the most part they were happy to leave the process in the hands of "constitutional experts" ... the apathy they had learned under the old technocratic rulers persisted into the new period. Most whites (and coloureds and Indians) supported de Klerk silently and even apathetically, content to leave constitutional negotiations to the political leader."* (Mervyn Frost, 1996:23)

Opinion surveys conducted by R.W. Johnson and this author before the elections showed that whites were increasingly gravitating towards the National Party as the elections drew nearer. While in mid-1993, among whites support for the National Party and the right-wing parties was virtually level pegging, by February 1994, just before the elections, among whites who indicated a political choice and an intention to vote, 62 per cent supported the NP, compared with 24 per cent supporting the right-wing parties who were resisting the tide. If one includes the conservative whites who supported Chief Buthelezi's strongly anti-ANC positioned IFP, the "*resistant*" proportion rose to 31 per cent (Johnson and Schlemmer, 1996:80). Among Afrikaans speakers roughly just more than one half supported the NP and just less than one half the conservative parties.



The first open General Election of 1994, although preceded by complex and drawn out negotiations, was in the final instance an event presided over and organised by the National Party, operating on behalf of the majority of members of racial minorities and the ANC, operating on behalf of Africans with the exception of deeply traditional Zulus who supported the IFP under Chief Buthelezi. The major dissenting vote was the vote for the single party that stood in the election to represent the principle of white self-determination under the leadership of Afrikaners, the Freedom Front. In the final outcome the Freedom Front gained 424 000 votes, some 18 - 20 per cent of the white vote and slightly under one-third of the Afrikaans vote. The right-wing vote would obviously been slightly higher had the Conservative Party participated. Clearly what had happened was that most whites and Afrikaners decided to consolidate their position by voting for the National Party, which emerged with 20 per cent in the election and was the second largest party after the ANC which received 62 per cent of the total vote.

## 5.5 THE SITUATION OF AFRIKANERS TODAY

An assessment of the situation of Afrikaners today is not simple. In every formal sense the country today is a non-racial democracy with the rights of individuals, including the individual's cultural and religious rights, protected by a sophisticated constitution. Conventional discrimination is prohibited and the principle of equality of status for all individuals and groups prevails. In terms of one dimension of principle in the constitution, Afrikaners, through the protection of the individual rights of members, have complete freedom to live the life of an ethnic community. South Africa is a far cry from, for example, multi-cultural Malawi in 1973, when this author was present in the country to hear the President, Dr. Hastings Banda instruct the population as follows: *"from this day you are all Chichewa now"* (Chichewa being the largest single language group in the country).

At the same time, however, the South African constitution makes special provision for the qualification of clauses relating to equality and discrimination by sanctioning affirmative action and equity legislation, which is intended to discriminate in favour of *"previously*

*disadvantaged*" people, and there is no "*sunset clause*" or time horizon for the provisions -- they exist in perpetuity. They do not only relate to employment but to state tender procedures and numerous other regulations by government. The qualifications to the basic constitutional provisions do not only relate to the public sector but to all employing organisations and equity legislation has recently been promulgated, which requires all organisations above fifty employees to prepare formal policies for affirmative action in their appointments.

These developments can obviously be justified on a number of grounds in the light of past discrimination and on the grounds that, unless the country achieves greater equality, it will not achieve the stability and necessary consensus on economic policy issues required for growth and development. From the point of view of the extent of opportunity for white minorities, however, the policies represent formal constraints relative to their qualifications. For example, the racial composition of public sector employment has changed rapidly and in mid-1997, whites made up 20 per cent of the service, but in terms of the minimum levels of qualifications necessary to obtain work in the public service (school standard 8 or equivalent), whites made up some 32 per cent of the population over 20 years of age (South African Government (1998) *White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service*, Government Printer). Policies of employment redress in the context of differential qualifications must inevitably create the fear or feeling among better-qualified minorities that they will be relatively disadvantaged. Whether this is defensible or not is not the immediate issue; in terms of the perceptions of many if not most whites, the new dispensation imposes racially-based constraints on them.

One obvious point which must be made is that this kind of exclusion affects all whites, not only Afrikaners (although the public service opportunities affect the Afrikaners more than the English-speaking whites because Afrikaners tended to look to the public sector for career opportunity more than the English-speakers). This is a vital point to remember because this commonality of circumstances, as well as the obvious racial and broader cultural similarities between fellow Europeans, may be a powerful factor interacting with the more particular ethnicity of Afrikaners.

There are, however, specific ways in which Afrikaners have had their scope of opportunity constrained. All the formerly Afrikaans-language universities, with the exception of the University of Stellenbosch, have adopted dual language policies with English on the ascendancy. The University of South Africa has formally shifted to English as its official policy. Afrikaans schools may not refuse entrance on grounds of language competence and if more than 40 students demand to be taught in a language other than Afrikaans, the school has to provide the alternative language of instruction, leading to a shift of the school's language identity. Most government departments have dropped the convention of using both English and Afrikaans in their official communications and Afrikaans is now almost never heard at official meetings or in public use. Afrikaners can no longer count on being attended to in Afrikaans in their dealings with officialdom. It has been proposed by majority party representatives that Afrikaans be dropped as an official language of parliament. The use of Afrikaans on the state television services has been scaled down dramatically.

*Afrikaans  
is  
not  
the  
main  
language*

What has happened is that in the short space of five years, Afrikaans as a language of public communication has been reduced from its formerly dominant position to that of little more than one of the eleven official languages of the country, which is formerly justified in terms of cultural and language equality. Since the use of eleven languages is impractical, what this means in practice is that Afrikaans has been replaced by English as the public language of the country.

All these developments may be perfectly understandable -- indeed many commentators would argue that they were generous to Afrikaners -- in the light of the needs and rights of the majority in the country (a different topic), but from the point of view of both the cultural interests of Afrikaners and their sense of ethnic status and honour, the effects could be expected to be significant. In terms of the propositions by Gurr (1993), Rothschild (1981) and Esman (1990) in the literature which has been reviewed, one might expect the Afrikaners, as a former ethnic elite which has rapidly lost its advantages, to re-mobilise in an attempt to restore or improve their ethnic status, or at least to resist any further erosion

of their cultural interests. This has not happened to any really significant extent although conservative Afrikaans-based parties have reacted very strongly to official treatment of the Afrikaans language.

Recently in parliament, a senior leader of the Freedom Front, currently the largest party espousing self-determination for Afrikaners, made the following statement:

*"You (the ANC government) are determined to disempower the Afrikaner and whites in all respects. You have already taken our freedom. Enough is enough ... If the ANC government wants confrontation, so be it. We are ready to take up that challenge."* (The Citizen, June 6, 1998)

It is also not uncommon to hear rumours that a more general mobilisation of conservative Afrikaners is taking place clandestinely. The sources of such rumours are often unreliable, but there is very little doubt that lesser or greater conspiracies are hatched in far right-wing circles on an ongoing basis. Hard evidence of this is manifest in occasional thefts of weapons from military installations, for which white right-wingers are arrested, who are then congratulated by far right-wing groupings (Citizen, June 6, 1998).

But other evidence shows that there is precious little political solidarity around the ethnic cause among Afrikaners. The MarkData database, assembled from regular nation-wide surveys over time, shows that the average level of support among Afrikaners for parties espousing self-determination for the ethnic group (The Freedom Front, The Conservative Party, the Herstigte Nasionale Party, the AWB and the Boerestaat Party) averaged only some 20 per cent over the period of 1995 to 1997 (MarkData (Pty) Ltd). This represents a drop in the level of support in the 1994 election, which was itself an erosion of the earlier position.

The results of the 1999 general election and polls conducted in the run-up to the election underscore this point even more heavily. In the MarkData pre-election poll conducted in March 1999 ( a poll which is substantially validated by the fact that it predicted the winning majority of the ANC to within 0,8 per cent -- 65,5 per cent versus the election outcome of 66,4 per cent), it was found that white Afrikaner support for the specifically Afrikaans

"ethnic" parties, the Freedom Front and the "*Afrikaner Eenheidsbeweging*" (Afrikaner Unity Movement, which incorporated the Conservative Party) had declined to some 14 per cent (the FF 11 per cent and the AEB 3 per cent). Even when second choices of parties are added (with adjustments to ensure that the addition does not include an overlap of first choices and second choices within the ethnic parties), the total endorsement of the two parties above is some 26 per cent.

Obviously it is possible that many ethnically engaged Afrikaners endorsed the National Party, formerly the party of Afrikaans ethnic solidarity, the Federal Alliance led by Louis Luyt, a prominent Afrikaner businessman and rugby administrator and other parties. The choice of party is by no means a guide to the cultural orientations of voters. But the other parties do not claim to act on behalf of Afrikaners. In the new situation the National Party and the other parties all claim to be non-ethnic and non-racial, although they in fact mobilise more successfully among some class and racial minorities than others. What the pattern does indicate is that Afrikaners no longer have a political vehicle for their ethnic interests and show little inclination to support the parties that offer this vehicle.

In the 1999 election results themselves, the two ethnic parties, the Freedom Front and the Afrikaner Eenheidsbeweging polled no more than 1.09 per cent of the vote and some 7 per cent of the Afrikaner votes, calculated on the assumption that virtually all the support they received was from this group.<sup>7</sup>

The reason for the drop-off in conservative Afrikaans support for ethnic parties lies mainly in the fact that they have swung towards the Democratic Party in large numbers. The Democratic Party has established a profile as a party best able to and most committed to voicing protest against majoritarian and anti-minority tendencies within the ANC government. It is a non-racial, although largely white party founded on liberal democratic and free-market principles, much like the far left-wing of the old South African and United Parties which Nationalist Afrikaners regarded with the deepest suspicion and even venomous hatred in the twenties, thirties and forties. In a MarkData post-election poll in

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<sup>7</sup> Calculations made on the basis of an extrapolation of 1996 census figures for white Afrikaans-speakers.

June 1999, the breakdown of support for the various parties in the election among Afrikaners and other groups was as follows; it will be noted that Afrikaans "ethnic" support has fallen to a meagre 11 per cent:

<b>Table 7</b> <b>PARTY SUPPORT AMONG POPULATION GROUPS AS REFLECTED IN A</b> <b>POST-1999 ELECTION POLL: NATIONWIDE MARKDATA OMNIBUS:</b> <b>SAMPLE N 2242, JUNE 1999</b>					
	<b>Blacks</b>	<b>Coloureds</b>	<b>Asians</b>	<b>White Afrikaans</b>	<b>White English</b>
National Party	0,4%	23,9%	11,0%	28,1%	12,4%
Democratic Party	0,2%	17,8%	53,2%	43,8%	67,0%
Freedom Front	0,2%	-	-	10,4%	3,6%
Afrik. Unity Mnt.	-	-	-	0,8%	-
Federal Alliance	0,1%	-	-	7,7%	-
ANC	85,9%	53,9%	35,0%	2,6%	4,8%
IFP	8,0%	-	-	-	-
UDM	3,0%	2,4%	-	1,4%	3,6%
PAC	0,4%	-	-	-	-
Others	2,0%	2,0%	1,0%	4,5%	8,7%

In drawing this review of Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation and demobilisation to a close, some comments on factors which seem significant at the present time in explaining the dramatic political decomposition of the group are appropriate. By way of introduction to this I give a little example of the fragmented consciousness among core opinion leaders.

In May 1998, this author addressed a group of prominent Afrikaners who had formed themselves into an ongoing and very serious, but informal discussion group in Pretoria. The address was on the implications for Afrikaans of new government policies in the field of affirmative action for black South Africans, one implication of which is that Afrikaans businesses of any substantial size which wish to operate as ethnic concerns, employing mainly Afrikaners, will be illegal because of new requirements of racial representativeness in workforces. The logic, from the side of government, is simply that it is necessary, in the light of past discrimination on racial grounds, for the composition of all significant organisations to be actively changed to allow more scope for black progress up the occupational ladder. Equal opportunities on merit, it is argued, are insufficient to achieve this, and therefore more positive engineering of outcomes is required. Hence the arguments in favour of the legislation are persuasive in the light of the effects of apartheid and racial discrimination in the past.

The composition of the group was diverse: retired and current senior officials in government and military officers, Afrikaans businessmen, journalists and people drawn from voluntary cultural associations. The reactions of the participants, all "core" Afrikaners, could not have been more varied. Many if not most of the senior officials and retired public sector personnel took the view that the legislation was understandable, sufficiently qualified to allow for adaptation to changing requirements in employment policies and as such was probably best accepted. The Afrikaans businessmen and professional took the line that they would make their individual adaptations and concentrate on making profits and accumulating wealth, even if it meant changing the ethnic profiles of their concerns. The journalists and intellectuals were divided between those who felt that the new dispensation was, once again understandable if not desirable, and had to be accepted, and those who felt that, intentionally or not, it constituted an attack in the rights of an ethnic group to exist and prosper within a multi-cultural society and as such had to be vehemently opposed. Clearly, there was no consensus or coherence among this rather typical group of leading Afrikaners in Pretoria, which used to be a stronghold of Afrikaans cultural mobilisation.

At least five factors need to be noted in respect of the decomposition of the group. First, one must bear in mind that the excesses of apartheid have created a powerful sense of guilt and a matching moral rationale for the discouragement of any forms of racially particularistic expression in South Africa, unless they are specifically linked to policies of redress in the powerfully centralised non-racial nation-building project of the ANC.

Second, Afrikaners have become a rather successful middle and upper-middle class. Brief extracts from the database maintained by MarkData (Pty) Ltd. illustrates this. The following estimates are based on the merged results of strictly comparable nation-wide samples of the South African adult population for the period 1995 to 1997, and hence represent an average over those years. The total sample size of all races was N 30480:

<b>Table 8</b> <b>LEVELS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AMONG</b> <b>SOUTH AFRICAN WHITES BY HOME LANGUAGE: 1995-1997</b> <b>(Source, MarkData database)</b>			
	<b>All S.A. Adults</b>	<b>White Afrikaans</b>	<b>White English</b>
Post-school qualification	5,4%	21.5%	26,7%
Graduates as % of adults	2,0%	9,2%	12,2%
Median household income	R 917	R 4 881	R 5 892
Median personal income among earners.	R 262	R 2 956	R 3 225
Semi-professional or higher among employed	14,8%	46.2%	47,4%
"Living standard measure": two highest categories	20,6%	85.6%	87,0%

The top two categories of the "*Living Standard Measure*", an index commonly used in commercial research, represent a middle to upper-middle class lifestyle, with at least one



vehicle, modern household appliances and electronic equipment and significant leisure expenditure. The other categories above are self-explanatory.

From the brief results presented above, it is clear that the white Afrikaners are only marginally less-successful in material terms than their white English-speaking counterparts, who have a standard of living and lifestyles comparable to, say, white Australians, New Zealanders and Canadians. Afrikaners are correspondingly much more affluent than South Africans of all races taken together, despite a rather rapid recent narrowing of racial inequality.

As such Afrikaners (and obviously their English-language compatriots) still have a perception of themselves as relatively comfortable compared with the mass of black South Africans. Their occupational achievements and experience also would give them considerable confidence in their abilities as individuals. Therefore it has to be considered that any ethnic resentments, no matter how genuinely felt, could be tempered by their relatively high levels of socio-economic security.

Thirdly, the policies of the new South African government in reducing the official status of the Afrikaans language and heritage, have been pursued within a broad rationale of equity and fairness for all minority languages. The favoured position of English in public communication is justified on the basis of the status of English as a world language and a lingua-franca. Furthermore, government Ministers hasten to reassure Afrikaners very frequently that their language and culture are valued and respected as part of the cultural diversity of the country. Very recently President Mandela announced his intention to establish a mechanism to deal with the fears and frustrations of minorities (*Citizen*, June 6, 1998), an intention which has been endorsed by the new President Mbeki. Constraints placed on the right of Afrikaners to mother-tongue schools are also justified on the basis of resource constraints and the consequent need for a sharing of facilities, or on the basis of the right of all children to gain admission to schools of their choice, even if it means that Afrikaans schools have to offer classes in English to accommodate the needs of the new enrolment.

The impact of these steps in language policy is more than somewhat ameliorated by the fact that most Afrikaners speak English reasonably well and the fact that a command of an international language has obvious benefits. In fact many Afrikaans parents are choosing to send their children to English schools for precisely this reason.

Fourthly, Afrikaners have a serious deficit of leadership equipped to respond to the new challenges within an ethnic framework. Part of the reason for this is that the character of the apartheid government, which presented itself as, and was generally perceived to be, an Afrikaner government, was such as to alienate most of the competent professionals and the intelligentsia from the ethnic cause. The distance which opened up between the Afrikaans intelligentsia and the government was carried over into the post-apartheid situation. This distance between the intelligentsia and the professionals and the ethnic cause has been preserved by the latter day rewards of being seen to be committed to the new nation-building project. This motivation applies particularly to businessmen and professionals whose careers are dependent on government contracts, consultancies and acceptance by the powerful (indirectly) state-controlled electronic media. At the very time of editing this section the author received a call from a senior executive in the largest Afrikaans press group, *Nasionale Pers*, formerly the powerful ally of the Afrikaner Nationalist cause, asking for advice on the appointment of persons to the Board of the Company to assist it in repositioning itself in a position likely to be seen to be sympathetic to racial transformation.

The political scientist Deon Geldenhuys, in a perceptive article, has typified the types of positioning and signals that most prominent members of the Afrikaans intelligentsia adopt or try to send today: a *"near obsession to depict Afrikaners as being in various political camps"*, a *"deathly anxiety that some Afrikaner cultural or political organisation will speak on their behalf"*, a replication of their former orthodox desire to be associated with the new political establishment and to remain within the political framework, an *"unholy fear of the taint of ethnicity"*, South Africa is unique and while ethnicity may be acceptable elsewhere, in South Africa it is deviant, and finally an identification with African culture (Deon Geldenhuys, 1999:13). Geldenhuys' assessment is well illustrated by the views of a

prominent, National Party Pretoria City Councillor who in fulsomely approving a proposal to rename the Capital as Mandela City said: "*It will show that we Afrikaners have embraced the values for which Nelson Mandela received international recognition*" (*Mail and Guardian*, July 2-8). Ethnic leadership, if it is to ever become viable again for the Afrikaners, will clearly have to rebuild itself over time.

In the fifth place, South Africa is part of a racially homogeneous sub-continent, and the sense of the dominance of the African cultural domain makes it difficult for minorities of European or Asian racial extraction not to perceive themselves as "*settler communities*", all justifiable claims to an indigenous status for Afrikaans notwithstanding. The fact that Afrikaners have feelings of identity based on group origin, and the fact that the early origin is "*European*", can quite easily become blended with a perception of having a type of "*guest status*" on the African continent. The brute fact that all white and Asian minorities are overwhelmingly outnumbered is also demoralising to racial minorities. In this connection the categorisations of de Nevers, referred to earlier, are relevant.

Finally in this review of developments, it is important to note that Afrikaners from the very earliest mobilisation had the church on their side, and particular expressions of Calvinism deeply enmeshed within the ethnic consciousness. In 1998, one of the three most influential dominees (Ministers of Religion) in the Pretoria N.G. Kerk, invited Archbishop Tutu, the foremost anti-apartheid church leader in the country, to give a sermon in his church, after which the Dominee apologised for Apartheid and broke into tears. The Afrikaner today is aware that no longer will religiously sanctioned principle offer any ethnic reassurance. Afrikaners no longer have God on their side.

Hence, while a sense of ethnic "*status-loss*" is palpable, it occurs within a political context of ambiguity at best and influential discouragement of ethnicity at worst. This ambiguity in the present status of Afrikaners quite obviously weakens any urge to mobilise in defence of ethnic identity, self-determination and the values formerly associated with the Afrikaner civil religion. Afrikaners are now more deeply divided and fragmented than they were in

the years before the Broederbond began its mobilisation in 1918. It is worthwhile recalling a quote from a Broederbond leader, Henning Klopper, referring to that period:

*"The years 1914 to 1917 ... were years of struggle for the Afrikaner, years of dissension, years of scattering (verstrooing), years of frustration. This was the decade after the English war in which we were destroyed. But we felt that we could not remain lying down; by the grace of God we had to stand up."* (quoted by Serfontein, 1979:30-31)

Thus, after nearly two centuries of attempting to establish, rationalise and defend an identity which at one point was the arguably the most controversial ethnic identity in the world, the Afrikaners today are scattering themselves to the political winds, desperate to escape the political identities of the past. While this may be widely seen as appropriate moral penance, it is a challenge to many theories of ethnic persistence. Is this the end of Afrikanerdom or will a new cycle of ethnic mobilisation commence sometime in the future?

Is ethnicity as fragile as this, or does it simply become latent under effective moral pressure, to rise Phoenix-like at some later point of history?

In order to deepen the insights adduced to this point, some attention needs to be given to empirical findings relevant to the questions.

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTE ON THE EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS WHICH FOLLOW

*In the chapters which follow, a range of research data is used which is drawn from previous studies undertaken by the candidate.* The studies have been chosen because, in addition to their original purposes, they appear to shed significant light on the issue under investigation. In some cases, however, had the studies been designed specially for this dissertation, the wording of certain items in research questionnaires or the selection of items would have been different. These shortcomings notwithstanding, the material has added value from the perspective of the approach adopted by the candidate.

In some cases further computer analysis would have been desirable, but the original records no longer existed.

If any one of the studies had been able to be conducted specially for this thesis, in the tradition of dissertations, much fuller technical specification of the data-set would have been provided. Since over eight different studies have been drawn on, however, such technical specification was simply not practical, since it would have resulted in the technical appendices exceeding the length of the main text and the dissertation running to an absurd length.

One alternative would have been to eliminate some of the studies in order to provide more detail on the remaining material. In the light of the different perspectives and the shifts in evidence over time which the various studies have provided, however, this would have thinned the texture of the evidence. Hence the variety of research has been retained, and the specification of the technical detail has been reduced, by deliberate choice.

## CHAPTER 6

# ASPECTS OF ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS AT THE POPULAR LEVEL AMONG AFRIKANERS IN SOUTH AFRICA FROM THE SEVENTIES TO THE NINETIES

### 6.1 INTRODUCTORY COMMENT

The previous chapter has examined Afrikaner nationalism and ethnicity in its public manifestations over time. These trends have been driven by the actions of ethnic leaders and political parties; what may be called the “civic forces” at work. Another level of ethnic activity and consciousness is that which exists at the level of the aggregates of individuals who comprise the groups. The civic phenomena do not necessarily coincide with the aggregates of individual attitudes. It is doubtful, for example, that all or even most middle class Germans in the thirties entertained ideas of themselves as a master race. Presumably, however, there has to be at least a minimum of attitudinal support for leader-led ethnic action at the civic level for a group to be mobilised.

The recent history of the Afrikaner ethnic movement has been that of a group in disarray and decline, as the previous chapter has shown. It is of interest to see whether the lack of cohesion is reflected in popular commitments and attitudes, which is what this chapter is about.

Any one empirical study of attitudes can be subject to biasing features and data-inconsistency, perhaps due to the wording of times or events that have taken place just before interviews and the like. For this reason, where possible, it is always advisable to compare results between different attitude surveys or surveys over time, and build up a picture of the general trends. Because attitude survey material is so sensitive to the context

of questioning and the wording of items, it is also not very useful to place a great deal of emphasis on the precision and minor variations in the results. Attitude surveys are most useful if they are used as broad indicators of a reality and should never be confused with that reality. For these reasons the review which follows is very broad, based on several surveys, and not much attention is given to the minute of deviations and differences. What is being sought is a broadly valid but approximate index or surrogate indicators of the texture of popular ethnic consciousness among Afrikaners in recent decades. The picture which emerges will be carried through to the final chapters, when the trends will be related to other findings and integrated conclusions drawn.

## 6.2 SELF-IDENTIFICATION AMONG AFRIKANERS

The recent subsidence of ethnic commitment among Afrikaners raises questions about the penetration of ethnic consciousness among Afrikaners at large. It is therefore of interest to review evidence relating to self-identification on a comparative basis, both over time and between groups in South Africa. By self-identification one means simply the tendency, or otherwise, for the members of a "*group*" identified in terms of a potentially ethnic "*marker*" like language, region or religion, to define and see themselves as being associated with that "*group*", hence incorporating it into their presentation of themselves to the surrounding social world. Ethnicity cannot be imposed on people (as Apartheid regimes in the past attempted to do); it has to be part of the self-categorization of the people in the group themselves.

In March to May 1974, this author conducted a nation-wide attitude study among a representative sample of whites in South Africa, among whom Afrikaans-speaking whites constituted a sub-sample of 641.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Fieldwork conducted by Market Research Africa (Pty) Ltd., personal interviews throughout. The sample was probability sample stratified by province, cities and towns and by rural-urban distinctions. The study was conducted at the request of and sponsored by the 1820 Settlers National Monument Association and the journal *Optima*. Hereafter this study will be referred to as the "*1974 survey*".

The respondents were presented with a list of well-used words describing different "groups" in South Africa and they were asked "*which word describes you best?*" The results were as follows for the Afrikaans-speakers:

<b>Table 9</b> <b>TERMS CHOSEN BY WHITE AFRIKAANS-SPEAKERS</b> <b>TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES: 1974</b>	
Afrikaans-speaking South African	50,7%
White South African/White	21,1%
South African	15,2%
Afrikaner	12,0%
Other definitions	0,7%

Tentatively, one is inclined to see the dominant choice of Afrikaans-speaking South African as legally correct but something of an identity compromise compared with the more explicit or exclusive term "*Afrikaner*", which is clearly a minority choice, and which is overshadowed by the racial identification of "*white*". One has to be tentative in this regard because there could have been people with as much fervent ethnic consciousness among the "*Afrikaans-speakers*" as among "*Afrikaners*"; the two descriptions are not mutually exclusive. In later evidence more light will be shed on this issue.

There was relatively little variation in the extent of choice of "*Afrikaner*" in the sample. People living in small rural towns were most inclined to choose it (19,5 per cent) and young adults (8,9 per cent) and people with degrees (6,9 per cent) least likely to choose it. Surprisingly, there was little tendency for people who were active in cultural or community organizations to choose this description more frequently than others (14,6 per cent). Members of business committees chose it somewhat less than others (6,7 per cent) and civil



servants slightly more frequently (15,7 per cent). These variations, however, are relatively minor and cannot lead to any particular conclusion.

One category of respondents, however, did select this description substantially more frequently than the rest of the sample. Some 25,9 per cent of people who were defined on the basis of other items in the study as "*ideological separatists*" chose to call themselves Afrikaners as opposed to other descriptions. This category was based on answers to other items which suggested that the people referred to were not necessarily racist or racially motivated but appeared to insist on a more consistent policy toward black South Africans to encourage them to develop towards ethnic autonomy and self-determination. Hence there appeared to be somewhat of a correlation between this fairly idealistic and programmatic "*apartheid*" orientation and a greater self-consciousness of a specifically "*Afrikaner*" identity.

This theme of self-identification was expanded in a later nation-wide survey among whites conducted in 1977.<sup>9</sup> In the 1977 attitude survey the Afrikaans-speaking white respondents were asked (in Afrikaans, obviously) "*What is most important to you -- the fact that you are an Afrikaner or the fact that you are a South African?*" Thus the "*compromise*" and rather bland and descriptive alternative of "*Afrikaans-speaking South African*" was eliminated by forcing a mutually exclusive choice. The results were as follows:

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<sup>9</sup> The study was designed by the author and the fieldwork carried out by Market and Opinion Surveys (Pty.) Ltd. among a nation-wide stratified probability "panel" of whites, among whom Afrikaans-speaking whites constituted a sub-sample of 1352 respondents. The responses were obtained in self-completion postal questionnaires. The panel was recruited for a period covering several surveys, with one-third random replacement each year, with incentives being the payment of subscriptions to magazines of the respondents' own choices so as to eliminate media-related biases. This postal panel became an institution was used time and again to correctly predict the outcome of whites-only elections.

**Table 10**  
**WHITE AFRIKAANS-SPEAKERS: CHOICE OF SELF-**  
**IDENTIFICATION BETWEEN AFRIKANER AND**  
**SOUTH AFRICAN: 1977**

Afrikaner	18.5%
South African	77.7%
Other write-in choices (diverse)	3.8%

This finding tends to confirm that of the 1974 study, to the effect that the fairly exclusive ethnic self-definition of "*Afrikaner*" was most definitely not the dominant choice. In fact it was a surprisingly small minority choice.

A further confirmation of the earlier findings was that those respondents with a strict and rather programmatic ideology of ethnic separatism (as assessed by responses to other items) were more likely than others (37,3 per cent vs 18.5 per cent for the overall sub-sample) to choose the description of "*Afrikaner*" above that of South African. There is an abundance of evidence in both the studies referred to that support for apartheid was racially or racialistically motivated (not the topic of this analysis), but here one finds a confirmation of the fact that, in part, a strict apartheid ideology was also, or for some of its proponents, a matter of an extension of ethnic consciousness beyond the in-group and onto others, no doubt at least in part motivated by the desire to protect the in-group.

One contradiction of the earlier study was found in the fact that Afrikaans-speaking graduates were more likely than others to choose the self-definition of "*Afrikaner*" (30,1 per cent). The fact that the choice was forced in the 1977 survey probably made the difference; perhaps the more self-confident graduates found it easier to disentangle themselves from the comforting general conformity to white South Africanism than the rank-and-file respondents.

In the 1977 study, as with the earlier investigation, persons associated with cultural or community organisations were not significantly more likely than others to see themselves as exclusively Afrikaans. One difference that did emerge was that those Afrikaans-speakers who were marginal to the extent of never or seldom attending church services were less likely than others to choose the self-definition of "Afrikaner" (5,5 per cent).

A rather striking finding in the 1977 survey is found in the fact that an "*Afrikaner*" self-definition was associated with a greater awareness of racial distinctions in South Africa. For example, respondents were asked whether or not they considered Afrikaans-speaking coloured people to be "*Afrikaners*". In the sample of Afrikaans-speaking whites as a whole some 52 per cent agreed that coloureds who spoke Afrikaans at home were Afrikaners, while 27,6 per cent felt that they were not Afrikaners and some 14,3 per cent were uncertain. Among the white Afrikaans-speakers who felt that coloureds were not Afrikaners, as many as 41,1 per cent considered themselves to be Afrikaners as opposed to South Africans -- well above the average. Hence there appears to be an association between the self-description of "*Afrikaner*" and racial exclusiveness. This obviously ties in with the suggestion made earlier in the dissertation that race became a marker in Afrikaner ethnic identity, but the opposite conclusion cannot be ruled out: this being that a racist consciousness stimulated a need for a term of self-identification which is clearly distinct from any terms which can be applied to brown Afrikaners.

In an attempt to identify the parameters of ethnic consciousness more closely, self-identification questions were included in a large nation-wide study conducted by this author in mid-1992.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The fieldwork was conducted by Market and Opinion Surveys (Pty) Ltd. The white sample was a stratified probability panel of 1665 respondents in all areas of South Africa, rural and urban. The method of questioning was a self-completion questionnaire. Very high response rates were obtained, namely 83 per cent, because of the fact that respondents were contacted to reply to repeat surveys in return for subscriptions to magazines of their choice (thus avoiding ideological suggestion). The panel had been successfully used by the firm for over a decade and, inter alia, provided excellent predictions of election outcomes. To avoid respondents developing greater sophistication or being socialised by the exercise, one-third of the panel was randomly replaced each year. The sample size of Afrikaans-speakers was 1045, but due to the length of the questionnaire, random sample splits were introduced (two versions of the questionnaire) and some of the items in this study were fielded among a random sub-sample of 505 Afrikaans speaking whites and 530 English speakers.

It is appropriate to begin with the second self-identification question asked. The phrasing was: *"All people have feelings of identity. They identify themselves with certain traditions, groups or life styles. Here is a range of statements of identity. How would you identify yourself, in the first place and in the second place."* The statements and the results comparing Afrikaans and English-speaking whites are given in Table 11.

<b>Table 11</b> <b>CHOICE OF IDENTITY STATEMENTS TO INDICATE</b> <b>PRIMARY AND SECONDARY IDENTIFICATION AMONG WHITES</b> <b>ACCORDING TO HOME LANGUAGE: 1992 (N 835)</b>				
Statement	Afrikaans speakers		English speakers	
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Individual with characteristics	15,2%	13,3%	19,7%	26,2%
South African in a mixed society	13,1%	12,7%	12,4%	19,0%
European/Western	1,2%	1,4%	6,6%	9,3%
Religious identity	9,7%	9,1%	3,4%	0,3%
Class identity	3,4%	15,6%	11,4%	16,6%
African	0,6%	2,4%	0,7%	1,4%
English-speaking South African	1,4%	1,8%	27,2%	12,4%
Afrikaans-speaking South African as with Afrikaans Coloureds	3,8%	6,7%	0,0%	0,0%
White Afrikaner	39,6%	9,1%	1,4%	0,3%
Other (open)	0,4%	0,6%	0,0%	0,7%

These results may reflect a shift in self-identification between the earlier studies reported on above and the 1992 study, but it impossible to be categorical about this since the form of

questioning was different. The results in Table 11 above suggest a stronger identification among Afrikaans-speaking whites with the appellation "*Afrikaner*", and in this case "*white Afrikaner*" specifically, compared with the previous results.

The major reason for this would probably have been the fact that the more ambiguous option of "*Afrikaans-speaking South African*" was not offered among the statements, quite deliberately. What was offered was the choice of describing themselves as "*Afrikaans-speakers*" but including coloured Afrikaans-speakers. Faced with this choice, as many as nearly 50 per cent of the Afrikaans-speaking whites in the sample opted for "*white Afrikaner*" as their primary or secondary identification. This demonstrates the earlier point that Afrikaner identity is an amalgam of racial and ethnic identity.

In retrospect, the English-speaking whites in the sample should have also been "*forced*" to make a racial choice by phrasing their comparable option as "*white English-speaking South African*"; possibly this was a mistake but it would probably not have worked very well as an option because of uneasiness about the political "*correctness*" of the description among English-speakers. Broadly, the English-speakers reveal a greater inclination than Afrikaners to describe themselves in class terms or as individuals with certain (non-ethnic) characteristics. One of the possible reasons is that English speakers are in fact a composite of people of diverse ethnic origins (Scots, Jews, Irish, etc.) but in South Africa the composite is united by a combination of race and language, but a language which is widely shared. Hence although the English speakers display some characteristics of an ethnic group, the identity is very blurred.

Both the Afrikaans and English-speakers tend to avoid the implicitly racial identification of European or Western person, even though the phrasing avoided the more politically incorrect use of the word "*white*". Had they been forced to use it they might have, but they had other identity options. As already indicated, the phrase English-speaking South African is usually associated with white racial identity, with the result that English-speaking whites had an easier option to choose.

The most important suggestion in these results, however, is that while many Afrikaners would probably have selected Afrikaans-speaking South African, as the previous results suggest, had they not had to accept coloureds as ethnic cohorts as part of the choice. Hence these results probably maximise the extent of identification with a specifically white and Afrikaner ethnic group.

All the results discussed above can be criticised for forcing respondents into categories. This methodological coercion is perfectly appropriate if one wishes for theoretical reasons to compare one "*forced*" or suggested choice with another, and the results certainly mean something. The criticism is valid, however, if the researcher attempts to draw conclusions as to the intensity or relevance of the categories presented. A choice between different ethnic descriptions can indicate their importance relative to one another but certainly not relative to a range of other possible identity choices.

An attempt was made to overcome this problem in the 1992 investigation by providing a completely open opportunity for respondents to choose self-descriptions. The item was phrased as follows: *"How would you describe yourself? A person in, say, Zimbabwe could describe himself or herself as a father, a mother, a clerk, an engineer, a farmer, a poor person, a rich person, an Ndebele, A MShona, a white, an Englishman, a sportsman, a black, a student, a Christian, an African, Zimbabwean and so on. Give three ways in which you would describe yourself."*

The choice of self-description was then left entirely to the respondent to provide. The choice of Zimbabwe as a basis for the examples was to make it clear that the examples given were purely hypothetical possibilities but without introducing a country or place which would be completely strange for South Africans with little feel for countries abroad.

The spontaneous replies of respondents, with open answers classified into broader categories, and with the three answers combined, are presented in Table 12. Because the form of the question was identical for all respondents, it is possible to compare the responses of Afrikaners with those of all other categories of South Africans.

**Table 12**  
**SPONTANEOUS SELF-IDENTIFICATION AMONG AFRIKANERS AND OTHER**  
**CATEGORIES OF SOUTH AFRICANS: THREE RESPONSES COMBINED: 1992**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Afrikaans-speaking Whites</b>	<b>English-speaking Whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>	<b>Coloured</b>	<b>Asian</b>
Black/African	3,0%	2,1%	59.7%	0.0%	5,8%
White	50,5%	50,0%	0.0%	0.0%	0,0%
South African	21,8%	40,3%	10.0%	37,4%	26,7%
Afrikaner/Afrikaans-speaking	23,2%	0,0%	0.0%	0.0%	0,0%
English-speaking	0,2%	28,3%	0.0%	0.0%	0,0%
Asian	0,0%	0,0%	0.0%	0,0%	37,2%
Hindu	0,0%	0,0%	0.0%	0,0%	17,4%
Coloured	0,0%	0,0%	0.0%	33,6%	0,0%
"Tribal" identity	0,0%	0,0%	0.0%	0.0%	0,0%
Religious identify	63,2%	25,9%	26.2%	53.0%	30,3%
Occupational role	29,9%	51,0%	28,6%	30,2%	48,8%
Class identity	12,6%	18,0%	40.2%	13,0%	29,2%
Family role	45,0%	32,7%	46,7%	48,9%	58,0%
Gender	6,5%	4,5%	12.0%	11,5%	7,0%
Sports person	4,4%	13,1%	8,6%	7,6%	8,1%
Moral character	5,0%	5,8%	12.9%	15.7%	11,7%
Other/diverse	Less than 5%				

If we accept these spontaneous choices or self-descriptions as an indication of the salience of ethnic identity, then one must inevitably draw the conclusion that ethnicity, as defined in the introduction to this chapter, is not the most basic element of self-consciousness in the society. In 1992, at any rate, the racial "*castes*" which were established long before apartheid were still the most significant sources of self-identification, followed by class or socio-economic distinctions.

Family roles and linkages are obviously significant to South Africans across the board (somewhat less so for the English-speaking whites), but these are not dividers in a society. Religion is also very significant, and while it has strong "*communal*" features among Muslims, and perhaps to a weaker extent among Hindus, it is not a feature which can set Afrikaners or English-speakers apart, since they both share religious denominations with coloureds, Indian Christians and with each other (the Afrikaners did not tend to specify a Calvinist affiliation).

Class appears to be dominantly an awareness of poverty and deprivation, and understandably it is strongest as a way in which people define themselves among Africans, followed by Indians. Surprisingly, perhaps, it is no stronger as a factor among coloureds than among whites, which possibly partly explains why coloureds were able to identify so readily with the predominantly middle class National Party in the 1994 elections.

"*Communal*" identity, at the level of popular consciousness, appears to be dominantly racially-based among Afrikaners, English-speakers and blacks, and it is roughly on a par with a broader South Africanism among coloureds and Indians. In a different context one would, of course, be able to define the Indians as an "*ethnic*" minority, say in the USA or the UK, for example, but its association with the racial classifications which has been long made in South Africa suggests that, as an identity factor, it is equivalent to the "*white*", African and coloured racial identities of the other groups.

The more unambiguously ethnic identities are those of "*Afrikaans*", as already indicated, "*Hindu*" (a religious communal identity) and English-speakers. In regard to the latter, and



referring back to earlier comments, the results show that the popular conception is that being "*English-speaking*" is a specific identity, not shared by English-speaking coloureds, blacks or Indians, since not one of the respondents in the latter three categories mentioned it as a factor or described themselves as being "*English-speaking*".

If one accepts, then, that "*Afrikaans*", "*English*" and "*Hindu*" are ethnic markers in the popular sentiment, one can assess their relative salience. The results would suggest that they follow race and broader South Africanism in salience in the popular consciousness among English-speakers, but among Afrikaners and Hindus, they are roughly as strong as the broader South Africanism (separate calculations were made to assess these relativities among Hindus). Among Afrikaners, however, the racial marker is the most salient.

Concluding broadly and provisionally from Table 12, the results seem to roughly confirm the earlier suggestions that a specifically "*Afrikaans*" identity, at the level of popular consciousness, is weaker among Afrikaners than their racial identity. Because even the Afrikaans identity does not cross the racial line to coloureds, however, it is an amalgam of ethnic and racial identity. Afrikaners, to put it simply, seem to see themselves as a particular kind of white South African.

One might also conclude from Table 12 that "*English*" identity among whites is as salient in the popular consciousness as Afrikaans identity is among Afrikaners, and that it is also an amalgam of racial and language-based ethnic consciousness. The fact that it is less prominent in the "*cultural politics*" of the country is probably due to the fact, that its features are not directly articulated by cultural leaders to the same extent as among Afrikaners, and to the fact that the continued existence of English as the "*lingua franca*" of South Africa is not in doubt; most of the "*non-English*" end up speaking English anyway and the English speakers can therefore be culturally more confident than others.

Ethnicity is not a quality or a characteristic which can be made to order by the purists. Groups construct their own identities over time in interaction with their social environments. It seems clear that the identities which have emerged over time are racial-

ethnic amalgams or ethnicities which have racial markers as prominent features. Furthermore, it would seem then, that in the decades up to the early nineties, a specifically Afrikaans-cum-racial identity was not the strongest identity factor among Afrikaners at large, whatever the cultural and political leaders might have claimed. This may be one of the reasons why the narrow Afrikaans-based political parties have not been particularly successful in mobilising support on Afrikaans, ethnic tickets other than in periods where the basis of mobilisation could simultaneously address other interests and concerns. The National Party's greater (white) inclusiveness after the sixties was well attuned to the identity sentiments of the larger majority of Afrikaners, and the speed with which Afrikaners have shifted to support the traditionally English Democratic Party lends weight to this feature among Afrikaners. These conclusions are provisional and will be carried forward to be assessed in the light of other findings.

### **6.3 THE SALIENCE OF CULTURAL AND ETHNIC CONCERN AND COMMITMENT AMONG WHITE AFRIKANERS**

Ethnic self-identification may not be the strongest identity anchor among rank-and-file Afrikaners but this, however, may not mean that the consciousness, even if secondary to race-consciousness, is unimportant in the political consciousness of Afrikaners. To explore this question it is necessary to return to other items in the surveys already reviewed.

The first question which one can address is the extent to which Afrikaners are and have been concerned about the maintenance of cultural and language rights and status. As is quite common in opinion survey research, the responses to direct questions on an issue which has a ring of social desirability about it can be misleading, and this has to be borne in mind in the results which are presented.

In the 1974 investigation, for example, Afrikaans-speaking respondents were asked: *"How important is it for a language group like Afrikaans-speaking South Africans to maintain their identity, language and cultural traditions?"* Some 86 per cent of the Afrikaans

respondents indicated that it was "*very important*". Only roughly one per cent felt that it was "*not at all important*". Hence cultural maintenance appears to be an issue of virtual consensus among the Afrikaans community at large.

Interesting deviations occurred among some categories of interest, however. For example, among the following categories the endorsement of the goal of cultural maintenance being "*very important*" was significantly lower than average of 86 per cent, namely:

- members of business committees: 51%
- race-integrationists, as measured by other items: 41%
- low church attenders: 67%
- low religiosity: 42%
- those with English-speaking close relatives: 51%
- those with English ancestry: 27%

Thus the consensus on cultural maintenance broke down at the margins of what may be termed the Afrikaans cultural core of people bound into the communal network by strong family and religious ties and by lack of exposure to the more liberal thinking in business. In other words, the situation may be that a concern with ethnic culture is part of a "*traditional mindset*", and that it is brittle when exposed to wider fields of interests. It may also be an indication that the more and outwardly-linked members of the cultural group withdraw their commitment to the values of the group.

Further evidence for this fragmentation at the edges of the group consensus is found in response to the question: "*In your occupation, is it difficult to act and interact specifically as an Afrikaner?*" Overall, 19 per cent of the respondents said that the difficulty was comprehensive (heeltemal moeilik), and this rose to 31 per cent and 100 per cent among respondents who had developed progressive ideas about race integration in business and occupational life respectively. These are indications of the fact, already referred to, that the Afrikaans cultural cohesion seemed to be bound up with the institutional racism of apartheid.

In fact, to a large extent the Afrikaans worldview seemed to rest on features other than the culture and language itself. Following an item on what characteristics or achievements

Afrikaners should be proud of, the question was asked "*What two things should Afrikaners not be proud of?*" The following answers suggest that "*cultural deviation*" was not the dominant concern; verbatim answers are classified in categories:

- moral or religious deviation:	46%
- lack of cultural cohesion and pride:	26%
- too little commitment to apartheid:	11%
- too great a commitment to apartheid:	11%
- too chauvinistic:	8%
- tolerance of immigration and its effects:	4%
- other - diverse:	14%

Here again we see that the moral worldview almost eclipses the cultural commitment. This item has the weakness, however, that if very little breakdown in commitment to culture was occurring at the stage the study was undertaken, as an issue it would not have had the salience to elicit responses comparable to those on issues around which problems did exist, like moral deviation. Other items were included, however, which perhaps provide a more valid indication of the level of commitment and concern on ethnic issues.

A range of statements was presented to respondents and they were asked to rate them on a scale of 10 in terms of the "*importance*" of each, thus enabling a comparative assessment of the concern over ethnic issues to be made. The average scores for each item in the range are presented in Table 13.

What these simple comparisons show is that cultural commitment among Afrikaners was not rated more highly than a range of other value positions. In fact, here again we see that a concern with morality and even with non-racial justice was rated more highly than ethnic concerns.

On all the ethnic concerns listed in the table there was an inverse correlation between level of education and degree of ethnic commitment -- graduates displayed the lowest degree of concern with ethnic issues. Members of social and cultural organizations did not display any greater degree of concern than the general public, although they were relatively more concerned with morality and with maintaining apartheid.

**Table 13**  
**RATING OF ISSUES IN TERMS OF IMPORTANCE:**  
**AFRIKAANS RESPONDENTS, 1974: AVERAGE SCORES OUT OF 10**  
**(Items are in random order with ethnic-cultural items presented last)**

To strengthen personal abilities and knowledge	8,8
To achieve personal success in the modern world	7,8
To maintain a strict religious outlook	9,0
Protection of whites against black competition	8,1
The danger of communism and terrorism	9,5
To live a happy and contented life	8,5
To work hard for monetary profit	8,6
To live an upright and moral life	9,4
To be a loyal follower of the country's leaders	8,4
Maintaining moral standards in films/magazines	8,0
Maintaining strict segregation of the races	8,3
Unity and loyalty to SA among white and non-white people	8,7
Fairness and justice for all races	9,0
To serve the country and all its people	8,8
<u>To serve the Afrikaans community</u>	8,5
<u>To promote the cultural affairs of Afrikaners</u>	7,9
<u>To promote the use of Afrikaans in business and in public</u>	8,2

The highest ratings of ethnic issues were given by an attitudinal category which may be called "Separationist-verligtes": people who displayed a firm but very idealistic and developmentally oriented approach to the separation of the races. The relationship

between commitment to the theoretical goals of (or rationalisations for) apartheid and a concern with the cultural and ethnic cohesion of Afrikaners was evident throughout other findings in the study.

Returning to the issues included in the table above, respondents were also asked to indicate whether or not certain of the issues were becoming more or less important over time. The following were the proportions indicating that a particular issue was becoming more important:

- Communism and terrorism:	90%
- Justice for all races:	67%
- An upright and moral life:	63%
- Cross-racial loyalty to SA:	62%
- Personal success and profit:	62%
- A strict religious outlook:	61%
- Protection of whites against competition from non-whites	60%
- Promoting the cultural affairs of Afrikaners:	56%
- Serving the Afrikaans community:	55%
- Promoting the use of Afrikaans:	50%

Here we see again that in the mid-seventies, in the mature period of apartheid when opposition to the system was just starting to build up to the serious proportions of the late seventies, rank-and-file Afrikaners appeared to be least concerned with ethnic issues and relatively more concerned with threats to the white system and also with greater justice for all races but in a context of the maintenance of white standards and traditional morality.

An indication of the relatively low sense of threat to Afrikaans culture and language is seen in the results of a question on what the sample perceived to be the hypothetical consequences of majority rule in South Africa; see Table 14 below:

**Table 14**  
**AFRIKAANS-SPEAKERS: PERCEIVED EFFECTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF**  
**RULE BY THE BLACK MAJORITY IN SOUTH AFRICA: PROPORTIONS**  
**ENDORISING EACH OF A RANGE OF ITEMS PRESENTED: 1974**  
**(Two items could be endorsed)**

Threats to public order and safety	58,5%
White job security threatened	47,8%
Lowered incomes and living standards	28,1%
Lifestyles and everyday culture would change	21,7%
Inter-racial marriage would occur	18,5%
Afrikaans language and culture would be threatened	18,4%
No undesirable consequences	0,4%
Uncertain/don't know	1,5%

These results also suggest that specifically ethnic concerns were not very high on the agenda of ordinary Afrikaners. Even among the members of social and cultural organizations there was no significantly higher level of commitment or concern with ethnic issues. Oddly enough, the only social category which displayed statistically significantly higher levels of concern with the survival of Afrikaans culture, as measured by the item above, were members not of the three Dutch Reformed "*susterkerke*" but of the Evangelical sects, among whom 26 per cent perceived a hypothetical threat to Afrikaans culture as opposed to the average of 18 per cent. Perhaps their religious "*displacement*" from other Afrikaners increased their awareness of Afrikaans cultural interests.

Hence in the mid-seventies, specific concerns with Afrikaans language and culture were not high on the barometer of popular sentiment and no evidence suggests that these issues were any more salient, relative to other issues, on the agendas of Afrikaans cultural leaders. There is, however, an abundance of evidence in the opinion survey referred to above that

the dominant concern of the public and of social leaders was with the status, power and protection of whites, rather than specifically of Afrikaners.

This same pattern is evident in the results of the study in October 1977, as described earlier. Readers will recall that late 1977 was a period when the popular protests against apartheid, which had erupted in June 1976, had not yet been suppressed by state action, and indeed had spread from the youth in the townships to adults. The early forerunners of the popular resistance movement, the United Democratic Front, had emerged in the form of the Black Parents Association and other similar groups, and it was clear that the ANC in exile was active in an undercover role in the resistance in the townships. Questions similar to those asked in 1974 were posed in late 1977.

Once again, the relative threats to various interests hypothetically predicted of a majority black government were probed and the results appear in Table 15:

<b>Table 15</b> <b>AFRIKAANS-SPEAKERS: PERCEIVED EFFECTS AND CONSEQUENCES</b> <b>OF RULE BY A BLACK MAJORITY IN SOUTH AFRICA: 1977</b> <b>(Two items could be endorsed)</b>	
Threats to public order and safety	80,4%
White job security threatened	37,2%
Lowered incomes and living standards	33,5%
Lifestyles, popular culture would change	18,1%
Afrikaans language, culture threatened	13,8%
Inter-racial marriage would occur	8,9%
No undesirable consequences	2,5%



In this set of items exact comparisons over time are possible since the wording of the items was identical to those in the 1974 survey. Comparing the results above with those in Table 14 shows that concerns about public order and safety had intensified markedly between 1974 and 1977, as one would have predicted. Concerns with white job security and with Afrikaans language and culture had actually declined in salience, as had the rather atavistic concern with miscegenation.

Once again, graduates displayed marginally less concern with ethnic survival than the rank-and-file (10 per cent vs 14 per cent), but no other category evinced greater or lesser concern with cultural survival than the average, not even Afrikaans cultural leaders.

As before, respondents were also asked to rate the importance of a range of issues of policy. In Table 16 below, the rank-ordering in terms of the ratings out of 10 for the those items which were common to the two surveys are presented for 1977 compared with the findings for 1974 derived from Table 15 above:

**Table 16**  
**AFRIKAANS-SPEAKERS: RANK-ORDERING OF THE RATED**  
**IMPORTANCE OF A RANGE OF POLICY ISSUES: 1974 AND 1977**

1974		1977
1	To live an upright and moral life	1
2	To maintain a strict religious outlook	2
3	Unity and loyalty to SA among white and non-white	3
4	<u>To serve the Afrikaans community</u>	6
5	Strict segregation of the races	9
6	Protection of whites against non-white competition	8
7	To protect morality in films and the media	4
8	To promote the cultural affairs of Afrikaners	7
9	To achieve personal success and achievement	5

The comparisons suggest that morality and religious views remained as important in the later period as before, and that the protection of the media against immorality had become more important (presumably because of more progressive influences in the media). The relative importance of ethnic and cultural concerns did not increase, and in fact in regard to "*serving the Afrikaans community*" the importance declined. The perceived importance of strict segregation of the races also declined, however, as did the protection of whites against non-white competition. Clearly, the political ground was shifting in the perceptions of Afrikaners, but the relatively greater emphasis on public morality than on ethnic protection or promotion remained the same.

In the 1977 survey, a more detailed view of the perceived importance of policy concerns was obtained from a series of questions on the policies of political parties. First, an open

question was asked on the *"most important principle or policy of the party you support"*. The spontaneous answers were classified and the results are presented in Table 17.

One notes in this table of replies the complete absence of any direct concern with Afrikaner ethnic interests in language or culture. Some 80 per cent of the respondents supported the National Party, but any emphasis of the ethnic commitments of the party is notably absent. Perhaps, however, the concern with Afrikaans cultural interests was simply taken for granted. This issue will be taken up again in due course.

<b>Table 17</b> <b>AFRIKAANS-SPEAKERS: THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE OR POLICY</b> <b>OF THE POLITICAL PARTY SUPPORTED: SPONTANEOUS ANSWERS</b> <b>CLASSIFIED: 1977</b>	
Apartheid/separate development/homeland development	20,8%
Peace/law and order	15,9%
No discrimination against blacks/justice for blacks	15,7%
Resisting foreign interference in SA affairs	7,4%
Protection of white rights	4,8%
Honesty and integrity/determination	4,4%
Protection of white power position	4,4%
Representation for blacks	3,7%
Anti-communism	0,8%
Other- diverse	6,8%

The open question dealt with above was followed by a structured item: *"As far as the policy of any political party is concerned, which of the following are of first and second*

*importance in your view?"* A range of options was presented, and the results of the primary choice are presented in Table 18 below:

<b>Table 18</b> <b>AFRIKAANS-SPEAKERS: MOST IMPORTANT POLICY OR PRINCIPLE OF</b> <b>A POLITICAL PARTY: FIRST CHOICE AMONG ALTERNATIVES</b> <b>PRESENTED: 1977</b>	
White security	27,2%
Fairness and justice for all races	15,1%
Maintenance of moral standards	13,6%
White power position	10,5%
Economic welfare	2,5%
Language/cultural interests of Afrikaners	1,1%
Other items	<1,0%

In terms of the second choices, language and cultural interests fared no better with only 1,6 per cent of respondents endorsing the issue. Contrary to earlier findings, however, in these results the better educated respondents were slightly more likely to endorse the cultural concerns: among professionals, the level of endorsement was roughly 9 per cent.

In a further question respondents were asked why they supported a particular political party, and a range of options was presented. The results were essentially very similar to those above, with the option: *"Represents my language and cultural group"* obtaining a mere 4,1 per cent endorsement as the primary reason and 2,3 per cent as the secondary reason. Once again, professionals were slightly more inclined to endorse the issue: 6 per cent vs 4 per cent, but the difference is hardly significant.

When respondents were asked why they were less than completely happy with the policies of the party they supported, one response option was: *"Too little attention to the interests of my language and culture"*. A mere 4,6 per cent indicated this to be a reason among those who were less than happy with their parties. Of interest, however, is the fact that among Afrikaans supporters of the old United Party, the Progressive Reform Party and the Democratic Party (opposition parties of the time), the proportions indicating that their dissatisfaction stemmed from too little attention to their ethnic interests rose to 18,5 per cent (UP), 29,5 per cent (PRP) and 38,5 per cent (DP). Also, among Afrikaners of low religiosity and low church attendance, as many as 46 per cent indicated dissatisfaction with the concern with Afrikaans cultural interests.

These strands of deviation suggest that while in the bosom of the National Party and the church, an over-arching concern with the ethnic interests of Afrikaners could indeed be taken for granted. Those Afrikaners who were outside of the Afrikaans institutional complex were the ones who became aware of their ethnic isolation and appeared to develop a more conscious concern with Afrikaans cultural issues. Oddly enough, this concern only appeared in the context of dissatisfaction with the party they were supporting. This might suggest that the National Party in the current phase may start to have the same effect, because its concern with seeking support from non-Afrikaners might also flush out a latent concern with ethnicity.

Finally in the 1977 survey, an opportunity was taken to lightly explore an underlying dimension of ethnic consciousness, namely the inclination to approach the world in a group or individual context. Admittedly, the examination could not be rigorous, since space and costs did not allow the use of scales, but the question was put to respondents: *"The interests of a group are more important than the interests of the individual. Do you agree fully, partly or disagree?"*

Among all Afrikaans respondents, 32 per cent agreed fully and 25 per cent disagreed. Among graduates 36 per cent agreed fully and among United Party supporters, no fewer

than 42 per cent agreed fully, once again suggesting that the isolation from the protective institutional embrace of the National Party "*activated*" a concern with collective solidarity.

At this stage, then, one might tentatively conclude that one of the reasons for the relative lack of emphasis on ethnic concerns that the results have produced is in fact that apartheid, a powerful protective political party deeply associated with Afrikaner concerns and an association with churches, which were equally Afrikaans in an all-encompassing sense, allowed ethnic concerns to sink into a type of latency.

Did the tendencies reflected in the results so far hold in the dispensation following the beginnings of transition in 1990?

In the 1992 survey referred to in the previous chapter and again in the previous section, further questions were posed; for example: *"In a new South Africa under a new constitution, which two of the following interest groups, if any, will probably have to give up most?"* The results, according to home language among whites, and party adherence are given in Table 19:

**Table 19**  
**WHITES: PERCEPTIONS OF THE TWO INTEREST GROUPS MOST LIKELY**  
**TO HAVE TO MAKE SACRIFICES IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA: 1992**  
**(Two answers summed hence percentages exceed 100%)**

	Afrikaners	English	NP	Right-Wing
Afrikaners in general	36,2%	14,9%	23,8%	43,8%
Less-privileged Afrikaners	17,3%	12,0%	14,3%	21,7%
Public servants	11,7%	16,9%	15,4%	8,6%
White farmers	23,6%	15,0%	13,9%	36,3%
White police/army	4,1%	2,7%	3,9%	2,4%
Various categories of whites	38,4%	50,4%	47,5%	39,3%
White business	18,6%	25,8%	22,6%	15,0%
Black activists	7,7%	14,4%	13,6%	3,8%
Homeland interests	3,9%	12,1%	6,4%	0,9%
Coloureds/Asians	2,6%	2,0%	2,9%	1,3%

These results suggest that over one half of Afrikaners and almost two thirds of right-wingers perceived a specific threat to Afrikaners in the new dispensation. If one allows for the fact that white public servants, farmers and members of the security forces are obviously mainly Afrikaans, then the perceived threat rises to slightly over 80 per cent among Afrikaners. There was quite clearly an ethnic structuring in the perceptions of the future, also seen very clearly in the fact that English-speakers, who are dominantly in business, saw a greater threat to business than did Afrikaners.

The question was asked of respondents: *"Which groups in South Africa do you think will refuse to be ruled by people who are not their own leaders?"* Only some 5 per cent of Afrikaans respondents mentioned *"Afrikaners"* as such, and even among the right wing

only 9 per cent mentioned Afrikaners. Many political categories were identified but clearly Afrikaans respondents, not even those in the right wing, perceived any basis for a consolidated ethnic response. The only substantial mention of an ethnic reaction as such was the expectation, among 17 per cent of Afrikaans respondents, that Zulus would demand self-determination. Rank-and-file Afrikaners, therefore, saw Zulus as more "*ethnically reactive*" than they felt that they were.

These findings from the 1992 study appear to be no more than confirming the pattern already established from the earlier studies, namely that even as the majority rule dispensation was fast approaching, the reactions of most Afrikaners and other whites was focused more on the loss of racial privileges rather than specifically on ethnic interests. Nevertheless, Afrikaners seemed to experience a greater sense of vulnerability as Afrikaners, and as such the results suggest that the perception of threats and changes, while racial in content, as it were, were ethnically structured in the sense that Afrikaners appeared to be much more threatened or cautious than the English speakers. Also, the findings show that the right-wing, notwithstanding its claim to be specifically concerned with ethnic self-determination, appeared to represent a sharper fear of racial injury than of ethnic loss, but once again seemingly as part of an ethnic response to the environment of change.

Certain items fielded in the 1992 survey had aspects comparable to those in the earlier studies and once again allow cautious comparisons over time to be made. In one question respondents were asked what the two most important reasons were for supporting any political party, but with a different range of options which emerged from depth interviews with all races rather than whites alone -- results are given in Table 20 below:



**Table 20**  
**TWO MOST IMPORTANT REASONS WHY PEOPLE SUPPORT**  
**POLITICAL PARTIES: CHOICE BETWEEN OPTIONS PRESENTED:**  
**WHITE AFRIKANERS: 1992**

	First reason	Second reason
Strongest party/most supporters	3,0%	2,2%
Works for national prestige and achievements	3,1%	2,8%
Great inspiring leader	2,4%	2,6%
Addresses material needs of people like yourself	17,6%	23,1%
Works for economic growth/investment	28,1%	33,0%
Represents language/cultural group	28,3%	15,9%

Readers will recall that in a previous enquiry in 1977, but with different options, language and cultural issues obtained a mere 1 per cent endorsement from Afrikaners. In the table above ethnic interests emerge as the second most important issue just behind economic prosperity. This may reflect a rise in the salience of ethnicity as the prospect of majority rule drew near, but it may also reflect the fact that the dominant items from the previous enquiry, namely moral standards and white interests were omitted (for reasons which had to do with a particular theoretical interest in the 1992 study). The findings above may also show that ethnicity may be very important in its own right, or may become a surrogate for racial interests if the articulation of racial interests is blocked, as is the case in the political climate which emerged in the nineties. There is also more than a suggestion in the comparison that an essential part of the self-image of being an Afrikaner is having a particular morality and value system, and when this is not available as a response alternative, the ethnic association is more directly expressed.

The comparison, however, is less than adequate because of the different items included in the 1992 study, but with this in mind another item was included which allowed a closer comparison with the 1977 study. Results are presented in Table 21.

The indications from this table are clear. First, there is an almost uncanny consistency in the replies endorsing white security and justice for all. Second, however, the importance of economic issues appeared to increase between 1977 and 1992. Thirdly, however, while there was a marginal increase in the importance attached to ethno-cultural issues, they still lag far behind racial interests even at the late stage of 1992 when the maintenance of racial privilege was doomed to extinction at the policy level. No meaningful shift towards an emphasis on ethnicity had occurred and race still appeared to be the dominant consideration. One should add, however, that the emphasis on conservative morality appeared to be declining.

<b>Table 21</b> <b>TWO MOST IMPORTANT REASONS FOR RESPONDENTS TO SUPPORT</b> <b>ANY POLITICAL PARTY: WHITE AFRIKANERS: 1992,</b> <b>WITH COMPARISONS TO 1977</b>			
	<b>1992</b>		<b>1977</b>
	<b>First reason</b>	<b>Second reason</b>	<b>First reason</b>
Future security of whites	26,5%	5,6%	27,2%
Fairness/justice all races	14,8%	8,5%	15,1%
Maintaining moral standards	6,7%	8,1%	13,6%
Maintaining white power	5,4%	9,1%	10,5%
Economic welfare	7,3%	18,4%	2,5%
Protection of language/culture	3,3%	10,0%	1,1%
Protecting minority occupations	1,9%	6,1%	Not asked

In a further attempt to assess the relative importance of race and ethnicity among the other interests of an embattled minority, respondents in the 1992 investigation were asked whether they were becoming "*more or less worried*" about a range of issues and developments. This form of questioning allowed a wide range of comparisons between the relative importance of issues to be made. In Table 22, results are presented according to home language:

<b>Table 22</b> <b>PROPORTIONS OF AFRIKAANS AND ENGLISH RESPONDENTS</b> <b>EXPRESSING INCREASING OR DECREASING CONCERN ABOUT</b> <b>A NUMBER OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS: 1992</b>				
	Afrikaans-speaking worried		English-speaking worried	
	more	less	more	less
Personal financial security	72,7%	9,3%	73,4%	5,2%
Future of Afrikaans	68,7%	10,7%	10,0%	36,2%
Crime and personal safety	82,2%	5,5%	83,1%	4,8%
The future economy	67,1%	18,8%	67,9%	17,6%
Cultural rights of minorities	67,1%	9,5%	54,1%	16,9%
Maintenance of western standards	50,5%	16,0%	50,3%	17,6%
Policies of the ANC	75,0%	6,3%	67,6%	11,0%
Race relations	56,0%	17,4%	43,8%	33,4%
Job opportunities for whites	74,3%	7,3%	65,2%	7,9%
Service/amenity standards	71,5%	6,5%	71,0%	3,4%

Here again, the relative importance of ethnic concerns, although high among Afrikaners, seems to be at a somewhat lower order than some of the critically high concerns like white

job opportunities, personal safety and financial security. There is no dominance of ethnic concern in these results.

The theme of ethnicity in the context of the emerging new dispensation was explored further in the 1992 survey in a very structured way with a number of statements. The statements and the responses to them are presented according to home language in Table 23:

<b>Table 23</b> <b>ATTITUDES IN REGARD TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND ETHNIC</b> <b>ISSUES IN POLITICS: PROPORTIONS AGREEING TO VARIOUS</b> <b>STATEMENTS BY HOME LANGUAGE AMONG WHITES: 1992</b> <b>(Selected items, not presented in the order given below)</b>		
	<b>Percentage agreement</b>	
	<b>Afrikaans</b>	<b>English</b>
Afrikaans self-determination is natural and should be respected	79,0%	62,1%
Afrikaans self-determination is old-fashioned and backward	21,2%	57,9%
Self-determination only way to maintain culture and traditions	50,7%	37,3%
If white economic security is guaranteed then no need for self-determination	57,2%	77,6%
One cannot expect cultural groups to be governed by other people	59,6%	28,6%
If economy is healthy and standards are civilised, no need for self-determination	47,9%	77,6%
A core area (an "Israel") should be set aside for white Afrikaner self-determination	43,5%	30,4%

The results above are helpful in attempting to untangle the dilemma of Afrikaner ethnicity and its expression. An "*ethnic*" or cultural group-based ideology is by no means a consistent or dominant feature of the political thinking of Afrikaners, as the results above show. There is an indication that nearly six out of ten would "*trade*" ethnic autonomy for economic prosperity, and almost the same goes for the maintenance of civilised standards and a sound economy. Some one-fifth of Afrikaners see self-determination as an old fashioned and redundant ideology. A measure of the extent of commitment to ethnic autonomy is the proportion wishing an area set aside as a kind of "*Israel*" for Afrikaners in South Africa, and it would amount to roughly four out of ten Afrikaners. Broadly it would seem as if about four out of ten Afrikaners have consistent and serious ethnic-cultural commitments.

On the other hand, however, there is no doubt that a far greater concern with ethnic issues exists among Afrikaners than among their English-speaking compatriots. The English are clearly ambiguous about Afrikaner cultural aspirations, since some roughly sixty per cent think that it should be respected but almost the same number think it to be old-fashioned and backward. In general, however, the English have far less of a feeling for aspirations to autonomy, probably because the status of English as a world language and the international dominance of Anglo-Saxon values provides a sense of security under almost any circumstance.

Perhaps the fifth item in the table is a measure of the difference between Afrikaners and English: some six out of ten Afrikaners feel that a "*group*" should be governed by its own people whereas only some 30 per cent of English can sympathise with this ambition.

A more recent data set analysed for this analysis is based on an opinion survey undertaken in May 1995, when many of the implications of the new dispensation were becoming clearer for South African voters.<sup>11</sup>

Respondents were presented with a range of statements of policy or ideological position and asked to indicate whether they agreed with the statement or not. The statements included, allow one to assess the relative concern with ethnic issues relative to issues of other types. The results, according to home language, are presented in Table 24.

The pattern of results in the table above suggest that Afrikaners are far less confident of coping in the new South Africa than their English-speaking counterparts. Some six out of ten believe that they will not be able to compete on a fair basis compared with less than five out of ten among the English-speakers. Some eight out of ten perceive life as having deteriorated compared with just over five out of ten among the English. Only one out of ten perceive the new government as having done its best for them compared with three times that proportion among the English and only three out of ten Afrikaners, half the proportion among the English, believe that there will be opportunities for maintaining their culture.

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<sup>11</sup> The fieldwork was undertaken by MarkData, then the survey research unit of the Human Sciences Research Council. The sample is of a random stratified design, comprising 2229 persons of all races, countrywide, rural and urban. Of these 445 were whites and 302 were white Afrikaners. Personal interviews were conducted. This author was responsible for the design of the sample and framed the questions analysed for the present analysis.

**Table 24**  
**LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS COVERING ETHNICITY**  
**AS COMPARED WITH OTHER ISSUES, ACCORDING TO**  
**HOME LANGUAGE: N 445, MAY 1995**

	Percentage agreement	
	Afrikaans	English
Religion is more important than politics	95.2%	75,4%
My main concern is my income - other things matter less	56.6%	47,5%
Since coming to power, the new government has done the best it can for people like me	11.8%	28,1%
Life in South Africa is becoming worse for people like myself	82.9%	52,9%
Crime and disorder have become the most serious issues in SA	96.8%	97,1%
SA is a country for black Africans, others will have to take second place	23.9%	36,6%
The main task of government is to see that people work hard/obey law	76.2%	77,3%
People like myself will not be able to compete on a fair basis in future	63.0%	46,6%
All people should be part of a new nation and forget their differences	35.2%	84,0%
In government, language groups should enjoy equal power as groups	80.1%	66,2%
Self-determination for language groups is the only way to protect language and culture	80.0%	51,1%
There are ample opportunities for all language groups to protect their interests in the new SA	31.4%	56,9%

Clearly there seems to be a basis for a defensive ethnic reaction or at least a sense of shared threat as Afrikaners. Indeed, the reactions are very different among the Afrikaners than they are among the English. Only roughly one third of the Afrikaners are convinced by the prospects of building a new nation, whereas over eighty per cent of the English feel that this is desirable. Some eight out of ten Afrikaners endorse the idea of some form of "group" participation in government, and surprisingly, almost as many English support this notion. Similarly, eight out of ten of the Afrikaners seem to endorse the idea of self-determination for language groups. This item is particularly interesting since it was asked in exactly the same form in the 1992 survey, when only 51 per cent of Afrikaners agreed that "*Self-determination is the only way to maintain culture and traditions*". A jump from 50 per cent to 80 per cent in three years is quite dramatic.

These responses could be a temporary phenomenon, reflecting the initial difficulties of adjustment to a new political situation, but on the other hand many of the effects of redistribution policies have yet to occur. At the very least, the results in the last table show that the politically "*latent*" ethnic motivation may be coming to the fore.

#### **6.4 INTERIM CONCLUSIONS ON THE SCOPE AND PATTERN OF MODERN AFRIKANER ETHNICITY**

A wide range of findings, based on a diversity of opinion questions, spanning almost twenty years has been reviewed. The results have been surprisingly consistent over most of the period, and the consistency has withstood different methods of questioning. Hence, within the obvious limitations of opinion-survey data one can be fairly confident in drawing brief interim conclusions at this stage about Afrikaans ethnicity at the popular level. The conclusions are interim because more focused data have yet to be reviewed.

The empirical evidence suggests that, in general, culturally-based Afrikaner political commitment and ethnic consciousness, specifically defined, has not been nearly as prominent in the construction of political and social meaning for the modern Afrikaner as



race identification, moral commitments and class or economic interests. Certainly, a consciousness of Afrikaans identity is pervasive, but it does not achieve the weight or the prominence of other concerns in comparative questioning.

The racial identifications, and the concern with traditional or conservative (Calvinist?) morality could be argued to be essential components of a more complex (or multiplex) "*ethnicity*", which could perhaps be described as a conservative Christian white-western identity, thus challenging many of the assumptions of Afrikaner ethnicity on which the study has been based. Does one conclude, then, that Afrikaners are no more or no less than a category of white South Africans who are more traditional in their morality than others, who have more closely identified with their racial status than others and who have about the same concern as other middle class South Africans with their economic advantages? Does one use this as a point of departure in beginning to look for reasons as to why these distinctions should hold -- reasons such as mobilisation, closer competition with blacks for economic occupations and other resources, historical myths perpetuated by leaders to serve power interests, etc. etc?

One must take such possible factors seriously as a contribution to any explanation of group sentiment, but it would avoid one additional finding which has been as consistent as the others. This is that while popular ethnic concern was for most of the period obviously not "*activated*" to compete with racial status or moral commitments in the modern political economy of South Africa, the findings have shown that it is consistently present as a set of personal or social commitments, perhaps outside of the political sphere.

Furthermore, the most recent evidence reviewed suggests an intensification of these ethnic sentiments to the point at which they might well become politically more salient as time goes by. This has seemed to be particularly the case with an inclination to support self-determination for Afrikaners.

One cannot avoid the conclusion, however, that for most of the period reviewed, one was observing a group consciousness at two levels. Race consciousness, material concerns and

an aggressive conservative morality were dominant at the level of political articulation, while ethnic group consciousness was a binding factor at a social and interpersonal level.

One of the sets of findings suggested that Afrikaners were also more inclined than English-speakers to conceptualise group interests as more important than individual interests, thus providing an underlying inclination supportive of ethnic mobilisation if it were to become more overt.

To explain this further one may recall that in the theoretical review, the proposition was made that ethnicity can be activated or become more overt, to constitute a form of social "*closure*" or group boundary to protect or promote material or power interests. To become functional in this way, however, the ethnicity has to pre-exist in the consciousness of the group concerned. Activists and politicians are unlikely to be able to manufacture it de novo, and if ethnicity was a purely manufactured phenomenon it would not be as ubiquitous as it appears to be. Among Afrikaners it quite clearly exists and is pervasive and valued, but in the modern period -- certainly since the early sixties and until very recently, it has not become mobilised in the interplay of political interests because it has been unnecessary.

Popular ethnic mobilisation of Afrikaners has been unnecessary for several reasons. As some of the findings have suggested, the encapsulation of Afrikaners in an institutional network of church and party, both having been possessed of a status and power position secured by racial status, allowed the question of identity to be taken for granted. Afrikaners generally did not have to compete on an ethnic "*ticket*" because their power interests were strengthened by associating more broadly with non-Afrikaans whites. Even the supposedly ethnic right-wing political parties have never let any opportunity slip by to enhance their support with English, Italian, German and Portuguese whites. In a sense, therefore, Jan Smuts, Louis Botha and the later Hertzog triumphed: they initially were able to locate Afrikaners within a broader and more powerful social alliance with British imperialism and English settlers which was essentially racial, and this broader framework has persisted remarkably in the popular consciousness. Whatever it intended to achieve in earlier decades, the National Party's role in opposing the inclusive tradition of Smuts and Botha

was essentially concerned with the power-balance and class trade-offs within the broader alliance, and at the stage of English language dominance the more intrinsic cultural and ethnic interests were very real, but no amount of ethnic rhetoric could convince the ordinary Afrikaner that broader white South Africanism was not the strategic ideal.

Within the social alliance, ethnic ideals could be kept alive, valued and expressed, but at a secondary level as far as manoeuvring for power and material advantages in the wider system was concerned. Socially, as the results show, Afrikaner ethnicity was always alive and well, supported by and including a more traditional moral outlook. Politically, however, it would seem that most Afrikaners had a shrewd sense that to abandon wider white South African solidarity would have been throwing away a precious asset, and a linkage with a wider western world of influence. While the National Party was sufficiently dominant to incorporate most English-speakers in a secondary status, Afrikaners in the National Party had no need to activate their language identity. The fact that some of the empirical material reviewed showed that Afrikaners outside the powerfully cushioning National Party and Dutch Reformed Church contexts were more self-conscious about their ethnic identity would tend to lend support to this possibility.

Afrikaans ethnicity, therefore, appears to have been socially salient but politically and economically "*latent*", while racial mobilisation was the strategic spearhead. Racial solidarity, however, by now has run its course, and while the effects were not yet evident at the time of the survey in 1992, the brief review of 1995 data suggests that some fundamental changes in the level at which ethnicity is articulated had taken place. One may speculate briefly at this point that if the party system in the new South Africa is unable to protect minority interests, then ethnicity as the basis for political mobilisation of Afrikaners could be called into play once again -- Afrikaner ethnicity may be poised for a political revival.

At the same time, however, one should recall that there remains a substantial minority of Afrikaners who are prepared to identify with the nation building initiatives of the ANC-led government. Among these Afrikaners one finds many of the business elites and academic

and intellectual leaders who, in terms of the survey evidence, have been marginal to the core of ethnic consciousness among the rank-and-file Afrikaners. Afrikaner leadership, thus, is deeply divided and the influence to keep the ethnic consciousness of Afrikaners a matter of private conviction will also have its effects. What the outcome will be is impossible to say, but this factor must be borne in mind as a reminder that there will never be complete consensus in the articulation of social and political commitments. Perhaps like the Jews, Afrikaners will always be characterised by both universal and particularistic, or communal, responses to political opportunities and constraints.

Another perspective which emerges from the findings concerns the conservative moral and religious outlook. It will be recalled that in one of the surveys reviewed, this dimension of commitment was not included in the fixed answer alternatives presented, and perhaps in its stead a cultural consciousness was approved very prominently. There is a possibility that the underlying and unarticulated consciousness which many or most Afrikaners have of themselves is in fact a blend of language and religious identity, and that this accounts for the ambiguity of identifications when only language as a label is referred to.

Finally, one has to note that while cultural, racial and economic concerns are all wrapped-up in a package of consciousness, there were indications in the data that a category of responses exists which reflects an evaluation of culture without a commensurate evaluation of racial and economic advantage. In this category of responses may be an indication of the seeds of a potential for ethnic leadership which would not be "*compromised*" as it were, by its correlates. This in particular will be explored in later empirical sections.

## CHAPTER 7

### **A NON-AFRIKANER INTERLUDE: A BRIEF COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF FLUIDITY OF ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG AFRICAN MINeworkERS IN A CONFLICT SITUATION**

The review of empirical evidence on Afrikaner ethnicity in the last chapter leaves the impression of ethnicity as a "*fluid*" phenomenon: one which is overt and active under some conditions but can be latent if social relations and conditions do not "*engage*" it. This author's understanding of this feature of ethnicity has been considerably deepened by a specific case study of ethnic conflict among African workers in the South African mining industry. This experience is offered in the chapter, which follows more or less as an illustrative "interlude", which will be drawn upon in the final chapter in order to assist in the interpretation of Afrikaner ethnicity in relation to wider ethnic dynamics.

### **ETHNIC CONFLICT AMONG BLACK WORKERS IN THE MINING INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN CONSCIOUSNESS AND ACTION**

From July 1986 to October 1987, serious conflict associated with ethnic competition erupted among the black employees in the gold mines in the Evander area to the East of Johannesburg. This conflict had a fairly long history, starting in July 1976 when a Pondo (Xhosa-speaking ethnic group from the Northern Transkei) group attacked Sotho-speaking colleagues at the Kinross mine, during which event six men were killed. In Sept 1981, nine men were seriously injured in a fight between ethnic dance teams at the same mine. The Sotho-speakers comprised a single language group recruited from both the Free State province and neighbouring Lesotho. They were all South Sothos; a distinctive language group.

In July 1986, the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) was involved in a boycott of the bar (saloon/pub) in one of the mines in the area and the office of the union was closed by management, heightening tension among workers. One of the union leaders was dismissed and the union mobilised among workers for support in demanding the dismissal of the mine Labour Superintendent, who was accused of favouritism.

In September 1986, there was a major fire disaster at the Kinross mine which led to a worker stay-away and a day of mourning, accompanied by worker marches. In March 1987, the Sotho-speakers accused Pondo Indunas (a team leader or foreman: the term Induna being a Zulu/Xhosa word for headman) of being aggressive in a routine search of men at a gate. In May 1987, Pondo miners clashed with members of a Sotho-speaking gang (the Russians -- mainly unemployed former miners) at a "*shebeen*" (an informal tavern) on a neighbouring farm, during which six men were killed. During the rest of May there were further attacks by Sotho-speaking miners on Pondo Indunas and miners, during which a further nine men were killed and many more seriously injured. As a result of the tensions over 100 men took voluntary discharge. The NUM demanded that the system of "*tribal*" Indunas be done away with and that the tribal groups be integrated fully in the hostel accommodation. Until then the men of different language groups had been accommodated in separate sections of the hostels. The Indunas agreed that there would be integration but that tribal segregation between individual rooms be retained. In these arguments and discussions there were accusations, once again, that the labour Superintendent was biased in favour of the Sotho group.

Then a rumour spread that Sotho workers were going to prevent the Pondos from entering the bar. The Pondos then mobilised to storm the bar and the ensuing fighting spread widely throughout the mine and nearby farms. A total of eleven men were killed, 12 injured and 52 were discharged. After these events the mine management strengthened security arrangements and the conflict subsided but understandable tensions persisted. Due to the tensions it was impossible to integrate the hostels as the NUM had recommended.

In late 1987, Dr. Kent McNamara and this author were commissioned by the understandably concerned mine management to investigate the incidents and the wider "*tribal*" conflict and prepare a report for the corporate management. As part of the investigation a representative sample of 800 miners, stratified according to five language groups in four mines in the area, was drawn and personal interviews conducted by trained interviewers. The fieldwork was undertaken by IMSA (Pty) Ltd. A report was prepared in April 1988, on the basis of which the observations which follow are made (McNamara and Schlemmer, 1988).

On the basis of the attitude survey and other aspects of the investigation, including individual interviews with role players, a complex picture of interaction between "*structural*", situational and ethnic causes of the conflict emerged. The following points were relevant:

- In spontaneous replies to probes on the causes of the conflict, only between 11 and 29 per cent of the miners themselves, depending on the particular mine, saw the conflict as being due to ethnic or "*tribal*" hostility. Further than this there was no consensus among the miners on the causes of the conflict. Some blamed the "*Russian*" gang or prostitutes for stirring up trouble, some blamed the favouritism of management, some blamed the union and some blamed the Indunas. It was almost as if some force overwhelmed the mineworkers which nobody fully understood.
- Even when pre-prepared alternative options on the cause of the conflict were presented to respondents, no useful consensus emerged. The dominant explanation chosen was that the attacks were simply acts of "*revenge*" and retaliation for actual or perceived injuries or insults (64 per cent mention). Other major reasons chosen were:
  - reactions of solidarity against management favouritism (57%)
  - revenge for acts against prostitutes (46%)
  - the protection of the jobs of the own ethnic group (38%)
  - to prove manhood (37%)
  - to attempt to acquire the jobs of workers in other ethnic categories (35%)

- to relieve the boredom of hostel life (20%)
- While general work satisfaction was fairly high, perceptions of the fairness of disciplinary procedures and of management treatment of groups revealed problems: over one third of workers regarded personnel practices as unfair.
- Some 40 per cent of the miners perceived the future employment opportunities for their "group" as at risk. Some 48 per cent of the Sotho workers at the most troubled mine saw future employment prospects of the Sotho as poor.
- There was very little conscious commitment to ethnic interests as such. Some 56 per cent of all the miners saw the relations and sympathy between the groups of different regional and language origin as "good". Only 25 per cent described inter-ethnic relations as generally poor.
- Ethnic in-group ties were generally conceived of as "home" ties and these ties were seen in a fairly utilitarian light: as sources of assistance, useful in sending messages home etc. The "home areas" from which miners had come were widely dispersed areas even within language categories, and hence for them to be linked together within language regions required a rudimentary concept of ethnicity.
- Home ties were not consciously seen as more important than other relationships in the workplace -- only 32 per cent placed home ties above work friendships in importance.
- But, the less conscious elements were powerful. For example some 66 per cent of miners said that they felt "safer" when there were many people from their home areas on the mine.
- Ethnic tension had not become an embedded as a polarising feature, despite the tragedies and the tensions, and 64 per cent of the miners felt that relations between the ethnic groups would improve in the future. Some 87 per cent of the miners felt that the



workers associated with the union "*trusted*" each other despite their different ethnic origins. Even more surprising, some 72 per cent of the men felt that the integration of rooms would reduce tensions and 39 per cent felt that it was the best way of avoiding conflict in the future. Only some 20 per cent felt that they would feel safer with and prefer roommates of the same origin as themselves.

- While home ties were obviously highly valued, only some 30 per cent of the miners who valued home ties conceptualised the significance of these ties as ethnic, cultural or linguistic in nature or significance.
- The rates of recruitment and re-employment of the two groups involved in the conflict had been declining slowly but steadily over the preceding years, and the rates of recruitment of Zulus, a minority on the mine, had been increasing, in part due to less labour militancy among the Zulus. Only some 23 per cent of the men who felt that their jobs were at risk saw the risk as being associated with their origins or ethnic status, however.
- In the most troubled mine, some 45 per cent of the Sothos mistrusted mine management and felt insecure as a consequence. At least a third of all miners and some 50 per cent of Pondos at the most troubled mine were to some degree or another consciously committed to the safeguarding of the employment opportunities of the ethnic in-group, which achieved a greater salience as a consequence of the mistrust of mine management.

In the special interviews conducted among Indunas and union leaders almost everyone seemed committed to a reconciliation between the different groups and to the integration of the labour force. The unionists tended to blame management for the tensions but could not explain how management would gain anything by creating conflict that would lead to serious production and income losses, quite aside from the costs of the damage to the mine property. The Indunas liked the idea of integrated residences but were cautious and one gained the impression that they feared that some event might spark inter-tribal warfare

within confined quarters. At the public level, at any rate, no one; neither unionists, workers, Indunas or managers, seemed to take an ethnocentric stance. The workers in general wanted to be "*comrades*" and identified strongly with the union. But in their recreation they coalesced into language-based ethnicity.

The conclusions to be drawn from this case study have suggested themselves already. Here one had a black workforce which under the influence of a progressive union, and in contradistinction to a dominantly white management, was overtly committed to inter-ethnic harmony between black workers, and which even after the episode of bloodthirsty clashes between Sothos and Pondos, maintained an optimistic and progressive view of inter-group relations. This overt commitment to unity was not purely superficial: it extended to positive recommendations from the workers themselves that hostel accommodation should be more ethnically integrated. While "*home*" ties were valued, for obvious reasons, they were conceptualised by workers within a situational and practical framework rather than as components of an ethnic identity.

But underneath the more public commitments, private anxieties were heightening tensions among and between the "*comrades*" at work. These anxieties were fed primarily by a downward trend in re-employment for the two major protagonists, the Sothos and the Pondos. Perceptions of management bias reinforced the anxieties.

The Zulus, who appear to have been the main beneficiaries of the trend in employment, never became the object of any hostility. The tensions and anxieties were just that, emotional arousal without any particular focus or formulated outlet. In this situation of heightened arousal, against a background of sheer survival anxieties relating to employment, to some extent anything could have happened. The tension could have found outlet in heightened mutual solidarity, or heightened labour militancy (which it did to a relatively limited extent), or in acts of aggression against Indunas as a status category, or perhaps even in the appearance of pathologies like alcoholism or depression.

For most of the men involved in the later conflict, however, no ambiguity or variability of identity in the conflict was evident at all. When some or another incident, like competition for the attentions of prostitutes or the other, relatively trivial incidents mentioned, provided a catalyst, language-group formation and mobilisation was immediate, and the resulting action displayed no sense of cross-language group sympathy at all. The violence occurred between tightly organised and utterly solitary language groups: by simple virtue of the fact that the men were in different language categories (despite speaking a form of simple Zulu (Fanakolo) as a common medium of communication on the mine) and that by virtue of home ties, they had a form of regional identity. The violence emerged as intensely ethnic action.

As the conflict developed it became mindlessly bloodthirsty. Men trying to escape from the faction fighting were dragged off security fences and slaughtered with bush-knives, mining equipment was broken up to provide deadly lumps and shafts of steel with which heads were crushed. Deadly fear swept the mines and scores of men whose existence depended on their work, dismissed themselves voluntarily and fled the area.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy was that at the end of the episode of bloodletting, the men themselves could not explain what it was all about. This kind of event used to take place all over the South African mining industry, and every two to three years some major episode of inter-ethnic killing occurred somewhere in the industry. The precipitating events make a mockery of any logic of causality.

In our report to management we identified the immediate cause of the conflict, as opposed to the precipitating events, as the heightened anxiety caused by preferential management recruiting practices, and furthermore recommended that the Induna system be modified to avoid ethnic team formation and that the hostels be integrated in ways suggested in discussions among the men themselves. But the pattern of findings suggested that for as long as the migrant labour system lasted, there would be a danger that tensions and anxieties related to job-security or conditions would "*activate*" a latent sense of group identity, sufficiently powerful for it to form a focus of mobilisation under stress. Among

other foci of solidarity and mobilisation, and despite the public disavowal of ethnic loyalties or the surprising lack of a highly self-conscious ethnic concern, this factor of identity seemed to have the most potential for bonding and social boundary-formation. Indeed it appeared to be explosive in its consequences. It is suggested, therefore, that this brief case study has something to offer by way of insights into the apparently fluid and ambiguous nature of Afrikaner ethnic consciousness.

## CHAPTER 8

### ETHNICITY WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A MULTI-VARIATE ANALYSIS

In the previous two chapters the responses of Afrikaans South Africans and African South Africans to the issue of ethnicity, or their actions in an ethnic context, have been explored directly on the basis of survey items. The analysis has been partial, however, because the review of basic theory in earlier chapters has suggested that ethnic responses or phenomena almost always occur in interaction with other goals, motivations or sentiments in any given situation. Hence the previous two chapters have in a sense begged the question of the way in which ethnic consciousness relates to the other variables with which ethnicity is intertwined.

The review of the relevant theory in fact imposes an obligation to consider the inter-relationships between ethnicity and other salient socio-political variables because the most fundamental issue of theoretical dispute is whether or not, or to what extent, ethnicity has an independent significance as a dimension of social structure and social action.

The immediate question, then, is whether the levels and intensities of ethnic motivation which the previous two chapters have displayed, on their own and relative to other issues of policy or commitment, are autonomous components in a mix of interaction or whether they are simply attitudinal "*surrogates*" for other concerns which may be less readily articulated or expressed in action. This question is very easily posed but very difficult to answer on the basis of persuasive evidence. When a South African says that he or she is concerned about his culture and values, how does one begin to try to find out whether culture is the real concern or whether, consciously or unconsciously, it is not perhaps a way of saying that he

or she is really concerned about standard of living and level of income relative to that of others with which it is compared?

One way is to probe more deeply, and to undertake a virtual social "*psycho-analysis*" of the subject, using perhaps techniques of association to try and establish what the concern with culture means once the possible layer of rationalisation has been penetrated. No doubt this would be generally accepted as the approach with greatest "*face validity*", as it were. The disadvantage of this approach is that, without huge and very skilled personnel resources, a very limited number of people can be interviewed in such depth, and one will immediately be confronted with the issue of how representative they are. This issue of representivity is very significant when dealing with a sentiment which is not necessarily consistently present across all categories of people and which has very varied nuances in its expression.

Another approach, which would be of unchallenged validity, would be to examine significant events, and in studying the circumstances which triggered the events, and the factors impinging on them, to discern the relative significance of ethnicity in relation to other salient factors in the action. This has been attempted in the brief report on ethnic conflict on the mines, reported in chapter 7, but the study, because it was an applied investigation, did not lend itself to a full examination of the issue at hand.

In this chapter, a third approach will be adopted, that of multi-variate analysis, and in particular Factor Analysis. The issues taken into account will be broadened beyond ethnicity, with a view to inspecting the inter-relationships between ethnic attitudes and attitudes to other issues in the socio-political field, on the assumption that the patterns will provide insights into the relative "autonomy" of the different issues.

This type of analysis requires large-scale aggregate data for the results to have statistical stability, and the further requirement of representivity means that national attitude survey data must be used where possible. Hence, the focus will turn to multi-variate analyses of nation-wide opinion polls on issues relevant to the theory.

Before talking about factor analysis, however, a limitation on this methodology in this study has to be presented. Nation-wide opinion polls, as everyone knows, are hugely expensive, and usually beyond the means of a single scholar. Hence the survey evidence reviewed ahead is not drawn from surveys dedicated to the purpose of this particular study. As before, this author has had to extract as much significance for this topic as possible from data-sets of multi-purpose surveys conducted by himself in the context of other investigations, some of them on different topics entirely. In order to compensate as much as possible for this limitation, a number of different surveys are examined, so that lacunae are reduced by complementarity. Even so, however, not all the gaps have been covered, and this will be taken into account in the interpretation.

## 8.1 FACTOR ANALYSIS AS A METHOD OF DETECTING UNDERLYING PATTERNS IN DATA

Factor analysis is a multi-variate statistical technique in terms of which the inter-correlations between a large number of items of measurement or observation are explained by a smaller number of "factors". These factors are the result of associations between the items and as such they represent, or can represent, the underlying structure of the pattern of difference in the detailed items. The "factors" are not clusters as such; they are a more subtle crystallisation of patterning in data.

An example would be a factor analysis conducted on, say 100 cardboard boxes. If all the measurements made on 100 boxes (height, length, areas of surfaces, width, volume, circumferences, diagonals, etc, etc,) were to be inter-correlated within the combined data-set, and subjected to a factor analysis, three basic "factors" should emerge to explain the variance, namely height, width, and length. These three factors could predict all the variations in the sample of boxes and allow one to better understand the structure of the shape of boxes. If the boxes, however, were not measured completely accurately, but rather described from recall, and if the boxes were to be home-made, and had odd shapes with curved or skew lines, then the three factors of length, height and depth would not explain

all the variance, but a proportion of it. The rest of the variance would be due to irregularity, and might produce a series of weak factors without much geometric significance.

The latter analogy of oddly-shaped home-made boxes, described rather than measured, is an approximation of what happens in factor analysis when applied to opinion poll data. It can explain the underlying structure, but a great deal of unavoidable imprecision as well as individually-based peculiarities and contradictions in the responses mean that the major factors seldom explain all the underlying patterning in the replies to the survey questions, and that some of the results are "dirty" in the sense of reflecting nothing more than imprecision.

An excellent introduction to the technique is that of R.J. Rummel. Rummel records that:

*"Confronted with entangled behaviour, unknown interdependencies, masses of qualitative and quantitative variables, and bad data, many social scientists are turning toward factor analysis to uncover major social and international patterns. Factor analysis ... can disentangle complex inter-relationships into their major and distinct regularities."* (Rummel, 1967:444)

*"It makes explicit and more precise the building of fact-linkages going on continuously in the human mind."* (p445)

Rummel points to many utilities of factor analysis but the following are most significant for current purposes:

*"Parsimony or data-reduction ... reducing a mass of information to an economical description"* (p448),

*"Structure. Factor analysis may be employed to discover the basic structure of a domain ..."* (449),

*"Hypothesis testing ... (regarding) dimensions of attitude, personality, group and social behaviour, voting and conflict. Since the meaning usually associated with "dimension" is that of a cluster or group of highly inter-correlated characteristics, or behaviour, factor analysis may be used to test for their empirical existence."* (p450), and

*"Theory. ... the analytic framework of social theories or models can be built from the geometric or algebraic structure of factor analysis."* (p451).



The factor analyses used in the following analyses are based on matrixes of correlations between the attitudinal variables in nation-wide opinion and attitude polls, in which all items are included in both the row and the column dimensions, and each item is inter-correlated with every other item, and both positive and negative correlations are obtained. The coefficients of correlation express the extent of the relationship between the row and column variables, and are expressed as geometric associations (angles) in the calculation. From these associations, a pattern will emerge which reflects the mutual convergences of variables in relation to one another as well as the positive or negative strength of the associations. These convergences or "*clusterings*" are the factors. The aim is to determine the minimum number of factors which will explain sufficient variance to be useful within the framework of the analysis.

It is important to note that a convergence denoting a factor is not a group of people. Rather, it is a "*tendency*" in their replies, and the same "*group*" may produce different tendencies. A factor is an abstract relationship between responses, and therefore one will often tend to find a single category of people associated with more than one factor.

A factor analysis initially produces what are called "*principal factors*", but the resulting pattern of associations, expressed as angles of variables in relation to one another, is usually "*rotated*" in order to find simpler and more distinct patterns in the data. The un-rotated results will, in the first factor reveal the "*largest pattern*" of association in the data (sometimes called the general factor), the next factor the next largest pattern which is relatively independent of the first factor, and so on. In producing this outcome, the calculation will show the proportion of the variance in an item which is associated with the pattern ("*commonality*"). The commonality results eventually produce the proportion of the overall variability in the data which is explained by the factor, and in social scientific data there is usually a substantial proportion of unexplained variance beyond that explained by the meaningful factors, as already indicated due to the individual peculiarities or measurement error in the data.

Since the underlying calculations are in the form of geometric associations within vectors of a multidimensional space, and each item has an association with each factor (the critical issue being the closeness of the association), the first pattern obtained can be refined by what has already been referred to as "*rotation*". The computer will search through the associations in order to find the arrangement or pattern of inter-relationships which maximises the geometrical distinction between patterns of association (factors) and in this way the most distinctive crystallisation of underlying associations is obtained. The analysis which follows, therefore, will be based on the rotated factors, using the Varimax method in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 6.1, Chapter 2., 1994). After rotation, scores for each factor, based on regression equations, can be calculated to show the relationship between factors and background variables like age, gender, etc.

There is a great deal more technical detail which could be discussed but that given above will suffice for present purposes, because the intention behind the analysis at hand does not require a very detailed technical interpretation of the results. Furthermore, there are certain weaknesses in the technique as applied to the kind of data available which makes a very detailed analysis inappropriate and possibly misleading. The correlations used are based on the Product Moment technique, which strictly speaking requires what is called ratio or interval data; data in which the effective distances between different values assigned to the variables are quantitative. This is not the case with most attitudinal items based on the usual "*strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree*" response alternatives. These responses are "*ordinal*" and not interval data. The responses approximate broadly to equal intervals. Therefore the base data is not very precise. Furthermore, each attitude statement in a survey of the type used is subject to misunderstanding by respondents, or by very specific understandings imposed by an individual's particular experience. Hence the items themselves tap the dimension being studied only roughly, and the resulting pattern depends on the aggregate trend which penetrates through the individual variability and peculiarities. Furthermore, respondents in attitude surveys can answer in different contexts without these contexts necessarily becoming evident. It was found in one of the sets of results which will be discussed that some of the white conservative respondents in 1992 were still making the assumption that majority rule would never come in South Africa while others in the same

party camp were expecting the worst, from their point of view. Obviously, their responses were contradictory as a consequence of this.

Therefore, what has been extracted from the factor analyses is not a very precise definition or delineation of the underlying patterns but simply an indication of the broad attitudinal geometry. The interest is definitely not in describing factors which emerge in quantitative terms, because the precision of the underlying data does not warrant it. Rather, the interest is in what kinds of content different underlying patterns have and whether or not ethnicity appears to vary to some extent independently of other variables. In other words the intention has simply been to explore whether or not certain factors are relatively autonomous within the pattern of variance. This is a modest requirement of factor analysis, and the data, in their aggregate form, are adequate for this purpose. Perhaps the approach to be adopted is best described as exploratory rather than definitive.

In the presentation of the results which follow, attitude items are shortened and paraphrased in the text for purely practical reasons, but sufficient content of the full item is given to allow the reader to anticipate the fuller wording of the items. Although technical appendices for the factor analyses reported on cannot be provided for reasons of practicality.

The factors will be presented initially not as overall factor descriptions but as lists of items with loadings on the factor above + or - 0.20. The loading indicates the strength of the contribution of the item to the factor structure. In this way readers will be able to judge the composition of the factors for themselves, rather than depending on this author's labelling of the pattern.

## 8.2 ETHNICITY WITHIN THE MIX OF SOCIO-POLITICAL ATTITUDES IN SOUTH AFRICA: DOES IT HAVE RELATIVELY AUTONOMOUS STATUS AS A FACTOR IN CONSCIOUSNESS, MOTIVATIONS AND COMMITMENTS?

In the discussion of results which follows, some of the exercises will be described in less detail than others in order to avoid a lengthy and tedious text. The more recent survey material will be given greater attention. All the survey data reported on are based on personal interviews within nation-wide samples, covering all sectors of the population, including rural and squatter communities.<sup>12</sup>

People of mixed blood and Asians have been omitted from some of this analysis for two reasons: first, their sample sizes are unavoidably smaller and produce less stable results, and second, the intention is to examine the anatomy of ethnic motivations and this objective does not require that all available data be analyzed. There is no intrinsic interest in describing race groups as such, since the study is about the search for general principles. The concentration on the results of Africans and whites has the additional advantage that these two groups are most polarised in terms of socio-economic levels and in terms of the theoretical discussion, this contrast is essential for the interaction between ethnicity and class relations to be examined. Furthermore, up to 1994, whites were the only fully enfranchised group and as such were a political "*majority*". Since 1994, Africans have become the numerically dominant voting category and the majority party, the ANC, draws the lion's share of its support from the African majority. They are now the political majority. Since the parties dominantly oriented to whites and Africans have been responsible for a great deal of the ethnic and anti-ethnic socialisation in South Africa, these reasons for the inclusion of the two groups are very relevant, and a "*test*" based on Africans

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<sup>12</sup> The sample designs are all multi-stage, probability samples drawn within strata defining size of community, rural-urban status and dwelling unit type, with the strata distinguishing between suburban houses, apartments, collective dwellings and single worker hostels, government "*township*" housing schemes, commercial farms and traditional subsistence rural areas. The sample sizes will be given for each survey reported on, and for whites and Africans, the two groups for which separate analyses will be presented.

and whites is conceptually sufficient for the purpose at hand. Other groups have been included in later results, however.

**One last qualification:** the items covering ethnic or cultural concerns are not comprehensive. The competing purposes in the multi-purpose surveys discussed meant that in all cases only a small handful of "*ethnic*" items could be included. The intention was merely to include "*indices*" of ethnic concern, to interact with indices of other interests, **and not to explore the internal dimensions of ethnicity, which is an objective reserved for other chapters.**

### 8.2.1 FIRST FACTOR ANALYSIS: FEBRUARY 1992

In February 1992, a series of political attitude items was included in a nation-wide survey of South Africans, with a sub-sample of 1100 Africans and 500 whites. Thirty-seven items were presented to respondents covering a range of constitutional issues, the protection of minority rights, opinions about transition to majority rule and expectations of what developments would be in the social, economic, cultural and inter-group relations fields.

In this and certain of the factor analyses which follow, only the factors will be presented which include ethnicity or related items with meaningful loadings on the factor. Some factors had less relevance to our interest since they had no "*ethnicity*" items with meaningful loadings on the factor.

From the thirty-seven items eight factors were extracted, with a relatively low contribution to overall variance of 10 per cent for Africans and 14 per cent for whites. The low contribution to variance was due to the large variety of items; for example the inclusion of items relating to expectations of the future, which in the end appeared not to interact very meaningfully with the attitude items. The following factors were of interest. Items which are relevant to the issue of ethnicity are emphasised:

**Table 25**  
**FACTOR ANALYSIS ONE:**  
**DESCRIPTION OF FACTOR COMPOSITION IN AN ATTITUDINAL**  
**SURVEY AMONG AFRICANS AND WHITES: FEBRUARY, 1992**  
**(Note: Items paraphrased and recast so that loadings can all read**  
**in one direction)**

AFRICANS: FACTOR 2:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 1,9% OUT OF 10%

SUPPORT FOR:

- DEVOLUTION TO LOWER TIERS: LOADING	0,52
- FREEDOM TO CRITICISE:	0,49
- PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP RIGHTS:	0,42
- COALITION GOVERNMENT:	0,40
- DEVOLUTION TO IMMEDIATE COMMUNITY:	0,40
- <i>NATIONAL CULTURAL UNIFORMITY:</i>	0,40
- SENATE VETO IN PARLIAMENT:	0,39
- NATIONALISATION OF BUSINESS:	0,32
- MAJORITY PARTY SOVEREIGNTY:	0,29
- PRESIDENTIAL POWERS ABOVE PARLIAMENT:	0,28
- STRONG TRADE UNION INFLUENCE ON GOVERNMENT:	0,27
- (language group representation in parliament :	0,15)

AFRICANS: FACTOR 4:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 1,6% OUT OF 10%

SUPPORT FOR:

- <i>TRADITIONAL LEADERS REPRESENTED IN</i>	
- <i>PARLIAMENT:</i>	0,61
- <i>HOMELANDS PRESERVED WITHIN PROVINCES:</i>	0,54
- <i>LANGUAGE GROUP REPRESENTATION:</i>	0,50
- STRONG TRADE UNION INFLUENCE:	0,32
- GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS GROWTH:	0,29
- LAWS TO CURB POLITICAL PROTEST:	0,28
- NATIONALISATION OF BUSINESS:	0,26
- ANTI-TAX REDUCTION:	0,25
- MAJORITY PARTY SOVEREIGNTY:	0,25
- AFFIRMATIVE ACTION:	0,25
- COALITION GOVERNMENT:	0,20

AFRICANS: FACTOR 6:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 1,0% OUT OF 10%

SUPPORT FOR:

- STRONG TRADE UNION INFLUENCE: 0,32
- OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENTIAL POWERS OVER PARLIAMENT: 0,28
- CIVIL SERVICE WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE: 0,26
- OPPOSITION TO REDISTRIBUTIVE TAXES: 0,26
- ANTI MAJORITY PARTY SOVEREIGNTY: 0,20
- *OPPOSITION TO NATIONAL CULTURAL UNIFORMITY:* 0,20
- FEEL SAFE IN SOCIETY: 0,20

WHITES: FACTOR 2:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 2.8% OUT OF 14%

SUPPORT FOR:

- HOMELANDS PART OF PROVINCES: 0,54
- TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN PARLIAMENT: 0,46
- RACE RELATIONS WILL IMPROVE: 0,41
- CHECKS ON MAJORITY PARTY POWERS: 0,41
- *LANGUAGE GROUP REPRESENTATION:* 0,39
- COALITION GOVERNMENT: 0,38
- FREEDOM TO PROTEST: 0,34
- POLITICAL VIOLENCE WILL DECLINE: 0,30
- BLOCKING SENATE: 0,23
- FEEL UNSAFE IN SOCIETY: 0,23

WHITES: FACTOR 6:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 1.1% OUT OF 14%

SUPPORT FOR:

- DEVOLUTION OF POWER TO LOCAL COMMUNITY: 0,54
- DEVOLUTION TO LOWER TIERS: 0,46
- PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP RIGHTS: 0,37
- *NATIONAL CULTURAL UNIFORMITY:* 0,28  
(note, item misunderstood: many people with a high association with this factor believed apartheid would continue and that national meant the "white nation")
- FEEL SAFE IN SOCIETY: 0,22
- CHECKS ON MAJORITY PARTY POWERS: 0,21
- TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN PARLIAMENT: 0,21
- *LANGUAGE GROUP REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT:* 0,17

WHITES: FACTOR 7:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 1.0% OUT OF 14%

SUPPORT FOR:

- STRONG TRADE UNION INFLUENCE: 0,58

- ANTI-REDISTRIBUTION TAX:	0,35
- PRESERVATION OF HOMELANDS WITHIN PROVINCES:	0,37
- <i>LANGUAGE GROUP REPRESENTATION:</i>	0,19

### 8.2.2 SECOND FACTOR ANALYSIS: JUNE 1992

The second factor analysis, also based on a nation-wide sample as described earlier, was conducted on 700 whites and 750 Africans. Altogether, 62 items were fielded for whites and 24 for Africans. The overall contributions to variance were 57 per cent in 8 factors among Africans and 46 per cent among 11 factors among whites.

**Table 26**  
**FACTOR ANALYSIS TWO:**  
**DESCRIPTION OF FACTOR COMPOSITION: JUNE 1992**

#### AFRICANS: FACTOR 8:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 5% OUT OF 57%

#### SUPPORT FOR :

- <i>LAWS TO PROTECT LANGUAGE AND CULTURE:</i>	0,80
- WEALTHY PEOPLE LIMITED TO ONE HOUSE:	0,35
- CURBS ON TRADE UNION INFLUENCE:	0,27
- EASIER SCHOOL EXAMS TO BENEFIT BLACKS:	0,25
- GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL BUSINESSES:	0,22
- ACTIVIST ORGANISATIONS (Civic Associations)	
NOT TO HAVE POWER IN CITY GOVERNMENT:	0,22
- REDISTRIBUTIVE TAXATION:	0,20
- TRADITIONAL CHIEFS IN GOVERNMENT:	0,15

REGRESSION FACTOR SCORES indicate that this factor is associated with:

- Dutch Reformed and Evangelical sect membership.
- Low school education
- Minority African languages, not Zulu or Xhosa
- Lower and higher levels of income rather than average levels

#### AFRICANS: FACTOR 4:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 5% OUT OF 57%

#### SUPPORT FOR :

- TRADITIONAL CHIEFS IN GOVERNMENT:	0,76
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- EASIER SCHOOL EXAMS TO BENEFIT BLACKS: 0,50
- (activist) CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS TO HAVE POWER  
IN CITY GOVERNMENT: 0,49
- LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO MAKE OWN LAWS: 0,39
- MANY BLACKS APPOINTED AS JUDGES: 0,29
- *LAWS TO PROTECT LANGUAGE AND CULTURE*: 0,20
- CURBS ON HIGHER WAGES FOR BLACKS: 0,19

REGRESSION FACTOR SCORES indicate that this factor is associated with:

- The Gereformeerde, Presbyterian and Congregational churches
- Post matriculation or degree qualifications
- Northern Sotho and Venda language groups
- Rural and former homeland residence
- Higher levels of income

#### WHITES: FACTOR 4:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 3.9% OUT OF 46%

#### SUPPORT FOR:

- *THE ACCEPTANCE OF GROUP AND CULTURAL  
DIFFERENCES IN NATION-BUILDING*: 0,68
- OTHER CONCERNS MORE IMPORTANT THAN  
INCOME: 0,60
- FRIENDS AND FAMILY DO NOT COME BEFORE  
OTHERS: 0,45
- RELIGION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN POLITICS: 0,42
- NON-AFRICANS SHOULD NOT TAKE SECOND BEST: 0,41
- ALL POLITICIANS MAKE FALSE PROMISES: 0,36
- *LAWS TO PROTECT LANGUAGE AND CULTURE*: 0,26
- DOING WRONG IS BAD EVEN IF NOT FOUND OUT: 0,26
- AGAINST FREE IMMIGRATION OF SKILLED PEOPLE: 0,24
- WHITES SHOULD NOT HAVE PRIVILEGES AS IN PAST: 0,23
- *OPPOSITION TO CULTURAL ASSIMILATION/UNITY*: 0,23
- AGAINST INTEGRATION OF MUNICIPAL AREAS: 0,21

REGRESSION FACTOR SCORES indicate that this factor is associated with:

- Dutch Reformed Church membership. hence also with Afrikaners
- High church attendance
- Moderate to high education levels
- Rural areas and to a lesser extent small towns
- Townhouses and semi-detached/farmhouses
- Under 34 year old people
- Lower income categories (due to youth)

#### WHITES: FACTOR 5:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 3.4% OUT OF 46%

SUPPORT FOR:

- *OPPOSITION TO CULTURAL ASSIMILATION/UNITY:* 0,52
- OPPOSE SECURITY FORCES CONTROLLED BY  
LARGEST PARTY: 0,52
- OPPOSE LAWS TO PREVENT PROTEST: 0,48
- OPPOSE NATIONALISATION OF MAJOR COMPANIES: 0,48
- *LAWS TO PROTECT LANGUAGE AND CULTURE:* 0,39
- REJECTION OF EASIER EXAMS TO HELP BLACKS: 0,35
- REJECTION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR BLACKS: 0,32
- NOT MUCH TO LEARN FROM AFRICANS: 0,22
- LIFE IN SA GETTING WORSE: 0,22
- CHANGE IS OCCURRING TOO QUICKLY: 0,20

REGRESSION FACTOR SCORES indicate that this factor is associated with:

- Catholic, Jewish and Atheist populations
- University degrees
- Rooms, townhouses and garden cottages
- 35 to 49 year old people
- Middle income levels

### 8.2.3 THIRD FACTOR ANALYSIS: JANUARY 1995

This research was directed at establishing attitudes in respect of priorities for government policy and for the stances of political parties. A series of objectives were given to be rated on a scale of importance.

In this factor analysis all factors will be described because of its regency and in order to present a profile of the overall patterning of attitudes. This analysis was carried out on a nation-wide sample of 1457 Africans and 407 whites. In the analysis among Africans **5 factors were extracted** contributing 46 per cent to the overall variance. Among whites, 6 factors were extracted contributing to the overall variance by 55 per cent.

**Table 27**  
**FACTOR ANALYSIS THREE:**  
**DESCRIPTION OF FACTOR COMPOSITION: JANUARY 1995**

AFRICANS: FACTOR 1:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 18% OUT OF 46%

SUPPORT FOR:

- DISCIPLINE AND STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS: 0,71
- REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH FROM RICH TO POOR: 0,69
- FAIR TREATMENT FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS: 0,60
- CONCERN WITH INTERESTS OF DISADVANTAGED: 0,53
- RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY: 0,32
- SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE POOR: 0,32
- PEACE AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GROUPS: 0,28

AFRICANS: FACTOR 2:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 8% OUT OF 46%

SUPPORT FOR:

- *PRIDE IN OWN GROUP:* 0,75
- *PROTECTION/PROMOTION OF CULTURAL RIGHTS:* 0,51
- RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY: 0,51
- RELIGIOUS AND MORAL VALUES: 0,46
- SOCIAL SERVICES FOR POOR: 0,38
- REDUCTION OF TAXES: 0,34

AFRICANS: FACTOR 3:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 7% OUT OF 46%

SUPPORT FOR:

- SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUALITY: 0,59
- RECONCILIATION AND PEACE: 0,54
- BETTER SALARIES, WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS: 0,54
- REDUCTION OF TAXES: 0,52
- RELIGIOUS AND MORAL VALUES: 0,41
- FAIR TREATMENT FOR ALL GROUPS: 0,26

AFRICANS: FACTOR 4:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 7% OUT OF 46%

SUPPORT FOR:

- INVESTMENT AND GROWTH: 0,63
- LAW AND ORDER: 0,57

- SALARIES, WAGES NOT IMPORTANT:	0,37
- <i>OWN CULTURAL RIGHTS</i> :	0,36
- SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUALITY:	0,36
- RELIGIOUS AND MORAL VALUES:	0,28
- SOCIAL SERVICES FOR POOR:	0,27
- FAIR TREATMENT FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS:	0,20

AFRICANS: FACTOR 5:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 6% OUT OF 46%

SUPPORT FOR:

- LOW COST HOUSING PROVISION:	0,70
- JOB CREATION:	0,57
- LAW AND ORDER:	0,40
- SOCIAL SERVICES FOR POOR:	0,35
- TAX REDUCTION:	0,22
- RELIGIOUS AND MORAL VALUES NOT IMPORTANT:	0,22

WHITES: FACTOR 1:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 14% OUT OF 55%

SUPPORT FOR:

- <i>OWN CULTURAL RIGHTS</i> :	0,74
- <i>PRIDE IN OWN GROUP</i> :	0,68
- RELIGIOUS AND MORAL VALUES:	0,67
- RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY:	0,36
- SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE POOR:	0,32
- BETTER SALARIES, WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS:	0,20
- FAIR/EQUAL TREATMENT FOR ALL NOT IMPORTANT:	0,25

WHITES: FACTOR 2:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 12% OUT OF 55%

SUPPORT FOR:

- JOB CREATION:	0,74
- LOW COST HOUSING:	0,65
- RECONCILIATION AND PEACE:	0,48
- ADDRESSING SOCIO-ECONOMIC INEQUALITY:	0,37
- LAW AND ORDER:	0,33
- INTERESTS OF THE DISADVANTAGED:	0,32
- SOCIAL SERVICES FOR POOR:	0,27
- LESSER IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE AND STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS:	0,28

WHITES: FACTOR 3:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 9% OUT OF 55%

SUPPORT FOR:

- INTERESTS OF DISADVANTAGED: 0,68
- REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH: 0,67
- BETTER SALARIES, WAGES AND CONDITIONS: 0,57
- SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE POOR: 0,34
- LAW ORDER AND CRIME LESS IMPORTANT: 0,25
- SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUALITY: 0,26
- LOW COST HOUSING: 0,22

WHITES: FACTOR 4:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 7% OUT OF 55%

SUPPORT FOR:

- DISCIPLINE AND STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS: 0,75
- RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY: 0,54
- PEACE AND RECONCILIATION: 0,55
- FAIR/ EQUAL TREATMENT FOR ALL: 0,41
- INTERESTS OF DISADVANTAGED: 0,27
- BETTER SALARIES AND WAGES NOT IMPORTANT: 0,19
- *PRIDE IN OWN GROUP:* 0,18

WHITE: FACTOR 5:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 6% OUT OF 55%

SUPPORT FOR:

- SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUALITY: 0,49
- FAIR TREATMENT FOR ALL: 0,49
- REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH: 0,26
- BETTER SALARIES, WAGES NOT IMPORTANT: 0,37
- REDUCTION OF TAXES NOT IMPORTANT: 0,73

WHITES: FACTOR 6:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 6% OUT OF 55%

SUPPORT FOR:

- INVESTMENT AND GROWTH: 0,79
- LAW AND ORDER: 0,54
- RECONCILIATION AND PEACE: 0,23
- FAIR/EQUAL TREATMENT FOR ALL NOT IMPORTANT: 0,25
- TAX REDUCTIONS NOT IMPORTANT: 0,23
- *PRIDE IN OWN GROUP NOT IMPORTANT:* 0,17

AN ADDITIONAL ETHNICITY FACTOR WHICH EMERGED AMONG ALL GROUPS IS PRESENTED BELOW:

ALL RACES: N 2259.

ETHNICITY FACTOR: FACTOR 1 ;

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 15% OUT OF OVERALL  
CONTRIBUTION OF 5 FACTORS OF 48%

SUPPORT FOR:

- <i>PRIDE IN OWN GROUP:</i>	0,74
- <i>PROTECTION OF CULTURAL RIGHTS:</i>	0,69
- RELIGIOUS AND MORAL VALUES:	0,64
- RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY:	0,52
- SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUALITY:	0,20
- LAW AND ORDER:	0,20
- SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE POOR:	0,21

REGRESSION FACTOR SCORES: an examination of these scores shows that this ethnicity factor is associated with:

- Whites dominantly, followed by blacks. and with coloureds and Asians weakly or negatively associated with it
- The Conservative Party, the Freedom Front, the African Christian Democratic Party, non-aligned Africans and the National Party in that order
- The Free State and the Eastern Cape
- 55 years and older
- Degrees and diplomas
- Afrikaans, Southern Sotho, Eastern Cape Xhosa
- Housewives and pensioners
- Afrikaans DRC churches and conservative Evangelical sects
- Towns rather than cities

#### 8.2.4 FOURTH FACTOR ANALYSIS: MAY/JUNE 1995

The analysis is based on a nation -wide survey among a sample of 2228 cases in mid 1995. The study was aimed at covering attitudes on a comprehensive range of policy issues, **including cultural rights and group-based issues**. The factor analysis has been conducted on the entire sample only. Its utility is that it can provide a complete and very recent overview of the role of ethnic motivations in the interplay of political attitudes in the South African population as a whole. There are rather more adequate ethnicity variables included than in the other analyses.

**Table 28**  
**FACTOR ANALYSIS FOUR:**  
**DESCRIPTION OF FACTOR COMPOSITION IN AN ATTITUDE**  
**SURVEY: JUNE, 1995**

ALL RACES: FACTOR 1:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 17% OUT OF AN OVERALL  
CONTRIBUTION OF 5 FACTORS OF 48%

SUPPORT FOR:

- LIFE SEEN TO BE IMPROVING: 0,71
- GOVERNMENT HAS DONE ITS BEST FOR ME: 0,72
- SA OFFERS A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL: 0,55
- POLITICAL LEADERS DO NOT MAKE FALSE PROMISES: 0,52
- AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL LANGUAGE GROUPS  
TO EXPAND THEIR INTERESTS IN A NEW COMMON SA: 0,48
- LAW AND ORDER, CRIME NOT THE MOST SERIOUS  
ISSUES: 0,40
- MY POLITICAL PARTY MAKES ME FEEL IMPORTANT  
AND RESPECTED: 0,33
- RELIGION NOT MORE IMPORTANT THAN POLITICS: 0,23
- PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF ABLE TO COMPETE WITH  
OTHERS: 0,27

ALL RACES: FACTOR 2:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 13% OUT OF 48%

SUPPORT FOR:

- *SELF-DETERMINATION FOR LANGUAGE GROUPS:* 0,60
- *LANGUAGE GROUPS SHOULD HAVE EQUAL POWER*  
*(CONSOCIATION):* 0,60
- RELIGION MORE IMPORTANT THAN POLITICS: 0,42
- CRIME AND DISORDER MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS: 0,54
- GOVT. TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO WORK/ SOCIAL  
DISCIPLINE: 0,34
- AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR LANGUAGE GROUPS IN  
NEW SA: 0,40
- POLITICAL LEADERS MAKE FALSE PROMISES: 0,25
- PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COMPETE: 0,24
- LOOK FORWARD TO A BETTER, MORE PROSPEROUS  
FUTURE: 0,23
- *ALL PEOPLE SHOULD TRY TO FORGET THEIR*  
*DIFFERENT TRADITIONS AND LANGUAGE GROUPS*  
*AND BE PART OF A GREAT NEW NATION:* 0,23

REGRESSION FACTOR SCORES: this factor is associated with the following:

- All urban areas

- Whites, Asians and coloureds in that order
- 35 years and older
- High school education and above
- Afrikaans, bilinguals, minority African languages
- POLITICAL PARTIES: PAC, NP, FF, CP, IFP
- Middle to higher incomes
- Self employment
- Jewish, Muslim, Dutch Reformed Churches, Evangelical sects, Shembe sect.
- Main concerns: crime, violence, illegal immigration, the economy.

ALL RACES: FACTOR 3:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 7% OUT OF 48%

SUPPORT FOR:

- MY POLITICAL PARTY MUST GIVE ME WHAT WANT, OTHERS MUST SACRIFICE: 0,76
- MY POLITICAL PARTY MAKES ME FEEL IMPORTANT AND RESPECTED: 0,56
- MAIN CONCERN IS INCOME, OTHER THINGS MATTER LESS: 0,57
- PEOPLE SHOULD WORK HARD AND OBEY LAW: 0,47
- SOUTH AFRICA A COUNTRY FOR BLACK AFRICANS: 0,34
- DISAPPOINTED IN GOVERNMENT: 0,20

ALL RACES: FACTOR 4:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 7% OUT OF 48%

SUPPORT FOR:

- GOVERNMENT CHANGING THINGS TOO SLOWLY: 0,68
- *ALL PEOPLE SHOULD TRY TO FORGET TRADITIONS AND LANGUAGE GROUPS AND BE PART OF A NEW SA:* 0,45
- SA OFFERS ALL A BETTER AND MORE PROSPEROUS FUTURE: 0,44
- *THERE IS AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL LANGUAGE GROUPS TO EXPAND THEIR INTERESTS IN A COMMON SA:* 0,35
- *SELF-DETERMINATION FOR LANGUAGE GROUPS REJECTED:* 0,21

FACTOR REGRESSION SCORES: this factor is associated with:

- Former homelands, coloured townships, black townships
- Africans and Coloureds
- Younger rather than older adults
- Primary school education
- Minority African languages,
- POLITICAL PARTIES: AZAPO, IFP, ANC



- Lower income
- Unemployed people, informal sector
- African Separatist Sects, Anglicans. Methodists and some Evangelical sects
- Major concerns, jobs and housing

ALL RACES: FACTOR 5:

CONTRIBUTION TO VARIANCE: 5% OUT OF 48%

SUPPORT FOR:

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| - WEALTHIER SHOULD GET POORER FOR SAKE OF EQUALITY: | 0,73 |
| - I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COMPETE WITH OTHERS:        | 0,49 |
| - SA A COUNTRY FOR BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS:            | 0,47 |
| - MAIN CONCERN IS INCOME. OTHER THINGS MATTER LESS: | 0,30 |
| - LIFE BECOMING WORSE:                              | 0,29 |
| - DISAPPOINTED IN GOVERNMENT:                       | 0,27 |
| - CRIME AND DISORDER NOT SERIOUS:                   | 0,22 |
| - POLITICAL LEADERS MAKE FALSE PROMISES:            | 0,20 |

This ends the range of factor analyses to be discussed. They appear to provide sufficient material for the patterns underlying the varied responses in the attitude surveys to be assessed in the light of the objectives of this investigation.

## 8.3 INTERPRETING THE PATTERNS

### 8.3.1 THE VARIANCE EXPLAINED

The variance explained by the factors extracted for the different analyses has varied from a low of 10 per cent (for reasons already given) to close to sixty per cent. What about the unexplained variance? Some additional variance could have been covered had more factors been extracted, but this would have meant working with less and less meaningful tendencies. An optimal result was aimed at.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "Eigenvalues" of one and above were taken as the cutting points for the extraction of factors (see SPSS, 6.1, 1994)

What, however, does the unexplained variance add up to?

In any society a great deal of the responses of people are contradictory and at times confused -- perhaps best described as a "*porridge*" of sentiment. Obviously South Africa has this in full measure and this is the major reason why the contribution of factors to the variance was not higher. The factors which were extracted identified what are in fact the indicators of a latent structure in the political culture which "*protrude*" from the porridge of relatively less focused and coherent sentiment. They are what could be termed "*nodes*" or lumps of ideological coherence which, because of this very coherence, make a great deal more impact on the society than the ebb and flow of less-coherent sentiment.

### 8.3.2 THE MEANING OF THE FACTORS

Thus far the factors which have been extracted have not yet been labelled in terms of their overall composition. The composition is comprised of both the items which achieve meaningful loadings and the strength of the loadings. In many cases items have been included with relatively low loadings (0.15 to 0.30), but this is deliberate. Because the exercise, as already stated, is exploratory, and the field is one of nuances, even quite low loadings can indicate a tendency which might assist in the interpretation of a factor.

Aside from this, the exercise of giving an overall conceptual description to a factor is a delicate one. One must be constantly mindful of the fact that the factors are circumscribed by the choice of items, and that the "*real*" factor of which the statistics are merely an indicator, is undoubtedly much richer and more complex in content. Any names given to factors, therefore, are merely working labels to assist in the analysis and may do great injustice to the content of consciousness behind them.

In interpreting the meaning of the factors, one must bear in mind that the same item can shift its meaning from one factor to another. The term "*fair treatment*", for example, can be a reform-directed concept in one factor and a defensive, conservative concept in the context of another factor. These shifts in meanings have to be interpreted in the context of the factor as a whole.

### 8.3.3 THE ANATOMY OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AS "INDICATED" BY THE FACTORS

In proceeding to attempt to give the factors labels, an attempt will also be made to draw the factors together into a map, or the anatomy, of socio-political consciousness. Recall that the different factor analyses, since they were based on different items, will be used to complement each other in describing the parameters of popular consciousness. It cannot be claimed that the conclusions drawn from the factor analyses are definitive, because very often the number of items able to be fielded was rather limited. The conclusions drawn have to be cautious, but the findings are at least suggestive.

#### **SOUTH AFRICA AT LARGE: BASED ON FACTORS IDENTIFIED IN FACTOR ANALYSIS 4, WITH REFERENCE TO ANALYSIS 3 AS WELL**

1. *RAINBOW NATION*: optimism, trust in the political system, secular, and unitary
2. *RELIGIOUS-ETHNIC TRADITIONALISM, SOCIAL DISCIPLINE AND ECONOMIC CONSERVATISM*: (virtually identical to multi-racial factor 3 in factor analysis 3)
- 3/5. *AFRICAN POWER AND ENTITLEMENT* (with lesser or greater cultural-traditionalism, more or less democratic)
4. *ANTI-PLURALIST "JACOBINISM"*

These factors for South Africa at large tend to obscure the finer nuances in both minority and majority consciousness. Therefore the same exercise will have to be repeated for whites and Africans. The four multi-racial factors above, however, are

a fairly faithful reflection of the major thrusts in the socio-political consciousness of South Africa at large. The "*Rainbow nation*" complex has in fact been a powerful metaphor in the programme of the initial Government of National Unity and in the broad interaction between the ANC and its constituencies. It is a compelling mindset while it lasts. Of all the factors it is possibly the least resilient, and some of the detailed item loadings reflect disappointment with government creeping in. It is the kind of optimistic consciousness which could perhaps endure if the economy is very successful, as it was in high-growth Malaysian and Indonesian plural societies, as opposed to, for example, lower-growth Sri-Lanka and India that have clearly not sustained an early post-liberation social harmony.

The ethnicity factor, number 2, is solid and is confirmed in all the factor analyses. What is also confirmed is that it is not a pure ethno-cultural factor but is consistently associated with religious and socio-economic conservatism. The ethnicity, therefore, is part of a complex of value conservation. It is, however, not reactionary, because more often than not in the item loadings there is clearly an association with socio-economic reform and improved social services. It may be defensive, but it is not associated with strong class demands. It is or appears to be a fairly gentle factor. It is, however, firm in terms of commitments to culture, religion and morality.

Factors 3 and 5 vary only slightly and they are clearly recognisable as parts of the same complex of "*Africanist*" or "*black*" solidarity and claims. There is complexity within the broader factor, as we will see among Africans, but it appears to cohere at a broader level as the equivalent of the "*anti-colonial*" claims so familiar in the Third World in this century. Within it there is lesser or greater emphasis on traditionalism, and lesser or greater concern with power, but the Africanist claims and expectations are consistently present.

Factor 4, the "*Jacobinism*" complex, is somewhat of a surprise since one might have expected it to have been subsumed under the "*Rainbow nation*" factor. Possibly the

Rainbow nation tendency is too generous, and the legacy of apartheid has required a more positive anti-pluralist thrust to emerge.

All these general factors cut across race to some extent: some coloured and Asian and a small number of white people, for example, would be associated with the Rainbow nation tendency, although factor 3/5 would be dominantly African. The ethno-religious factor, however, is more non-racial in its composition, reflecting a strong sentiment that one can recognise in both majority and minority consciousness. The ethno-religious factor may also be the most universal of the factors, and least time and place bound, because many of the ethnic cultures in the world at large may have a similar broad composition.

#### AFRICAN SOUTH AFRICANS

When looking in more detail at the African population categories, some of the broader factors above dis-aggregate into more specific tendencies. Although the following map is based largely on the January 1995 analysis, factors emerging from the whole analysis which confirm these trends are built in, as presented below:

#### **ANATOMY OF AFRICAN CONSCIOUSNESS BASED LARGELY ON FACTOR ANALYSIS THREE, WITH INFLUENCES FROM OTHERS**

1. *SOCIAL-MORAL CONSERVATISM AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC REFORM*
- 2/4. *ETHNIC-TRADITIONALIST-RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND REFORM* (with confirmation from 1992: 1 and 2)
3. *RELIGIOSITY AND RECONCILIATION*
5. *POWER, POPULIST DEMANDS AND ENTITLEMENT*: this factor is in fact a dimension moving from lesser or greater radicalism, lesser or greater emphasis on traditionalism, and lesser or greater acceptance of power centralism (see 1992 analyses). One could make a case, therefore, for the factor to be dis-aggregated into power nuances, as follows:
  - *AFRICANIST, ETHNO-TRADITIONAL POWER CLAIMS*
  - *POPULIST-PROLETARIAN POWER CLAIMS*
 both of them more or less democratic in orientation.

## WHITES

Being a largely middle class sub-society, with a great deal of internal differentiation, the factors which emerge are more differentiated than those among Africans. Based on the January 1995 analysis, but drawing nuances from the others, and from regression factor scores, the line-up of tendencies appears to be as follows:

### ANATOMY OF WHITE CONSCIOUSNESS BASED ON FACTOR ANALYSIS THREE, AS INFLUENCED BY OTHERS

- 1a. *DEFENSIVE ETHNO-TRADITIONALIST-RELIGIOUS SOCIAL CONSERVATISM WITH ECONOMIC CONSERVATISM* (largely Afrikaans, non city) (see both of the 1992 factor analyses for confirmation of this factor)
- 1.b. *SECULAR ETHNO-CONSERVATIVE IDENTITY WITH SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSERVATISM* (Jewish, Catholic, secular identities but not necessarily excluding Afrikaans non-traditional identity).
2. *SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC REFORM AND DELIVERY*
- 3/5. *LEFT-LEANING REFORM AND REDISTRIBUTION*
4. *CONSERVATIVE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE AND REFORM*
6. *CAPITALIST INVESTMENT ORIENTATION*, more or less conservative in orientation (also in factor 7, Feb 1992)  
FEB.92: 6 *ANTI-CENTRALIST DEMOCRATS*, including more or less mild ethnic consciousness (see factor 6, Feb 1992)

In reviewing these tendencies, it is interesting to what extent the diverse forms of retreat from support for Apartheid among whites has differentiated political consciousness, so that the nuances of ideology appear more clearly in the white than in the African factors. The ethnicity dimensions are very similar to those among Africans, and it is in these tendencies, which cut across racial divisions, that the more "*rooted*" nature of ethnicity emerges.

Among the whites, however, it is almost as if a factor is missing. A critic of this analysis may well ask why there is no factor based on WHITE RACIAL INTERESTS? One reply to this is that it exists in the non-explained variance, but was not sufficiently structured or coherent to emerge as a factor, partly because most whites no longer have the confidence to articulate it directly. In this regard one

must bear in mind that whites in South Africa have become sufficiently apologetic about the history of apartheid to have experienced a fragmentation of any formerly focused and overt racial identification and interest-orientation. As will be pointed out in the next chapter, the political party which enjoys the major share of white support, the National Party, is about as formless and un-focused as the unexplained variance in the factor analyses. If one looks at the white factor analysis results, one can find the Democratic Party (in factor 2 and 6 in the white analysis), the Conservative Party and the Freedom Front (and perhaps a subdued section of the National Party) in factor 1a. One recognises white ANC-SACP supporters in factor 3/5. One only sees a dimension of the National Party in factor 4. but for the rest the tendencies which gave the party its dominant position in white politics at the time tend to be smothered in uncertainty and contradictions, within the unexplained variance.

This, then, is how the anatomy of political consciousness emerges from the factor analyses. It appears to accord with and be confirmed by the general appearance of political debate in the society. What then, do these patterns tell us about the topic of this study -- ethnic identity?

#### 8.4 UNPACKING ETHNICITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The simultaneous emergence of a virtually identical ethno-religious identity with a traditional flavour among both whites, mainly Afrikaans, and Africans, and the parallel phenomenon of a more secular ethnic consciousness which involves other minorities as well, is noteworthy. It tends to counter any notion that ethnicity (as opposed to a broad and formless racial consciousness) existed solely as a rationalisation for white domination. This point is strengthened by the fact that the ethnicity factors are less associated with economic conservatism than they are with a mild social responsibility and reform consciousness. Unless it is remarkably well disguised, there is hardly any semblance of the notion of

"white greed" in the ethnicity factors -- it no doubt exists but was smothered in the unexplained variance.

This interim conclusion would not entirely satisfy the radical-instrumentalist school of analysis in South Africa, because it could be argued that these ethnic sentiments, no matter how much they cut across race in their dimensions, could nevertheless have been exploited as a prop for white domination. This may be so, but the urge for white domination did not create them. There certainly appears to be "*intrinsic*" content and autonomy in the ethnic factors.

An interesting feature of the way in which ethnic group consciousness has emerged in the factors is that it is not always at odds with "*nation-building*", in an overarching national context. For example, factor 2 in the multi-racial factor analysis of May 1995, gives a positive loading not only on particularist items but also on items which have to do with ethnic "*space*" in an overarching patriotism and with the ideals of national unity. In other words, the simultaneous appearance of both general and particular symbolism in the same factor hints at the possibility of symbolic trade-offs.

Another implication of the patterns relating to ethnicity is that they may have strong religious-moral value content, but they are clearly more strongly associated with smaller or threatened language interests than with the interests of the super-dominant languages like English, Xhosa and Zulu. The latter two languages may be under threat from English as a bureaucratic, political and economic language, but their currencies as lingua franca at street level among the black majority are very strong. This is not the case with Afrikaans, the Sotho languages, but particularly the very small language groupings like Ndebele, Venda and Changana-Tsonga.

The suggestion in Chapter 2, that ethnicity may be weakened as people move up the scale of economic and educational status, is not confirmed by this analysis. The factors relating to communal identity tend to be more middle class than otherwise. This is particularly to be seen among Africans, among whom ethno-religious identity concerns are, if anything, more



likely to be found among the less than very poor and among the better-educated people than among the rank-and-file proletariat. As far as the South African case goes, then, ethnicity is not obliterated by modernisation or by socio-economic mobility. This would not deny the fact that there is a great differentiation of socio-political consciousness among the middle and emerging middle classes.

The last general issue which emerges from the factor analysis is that ethnic consciousness, as opposed to a broader racial and radical racial-Africanist consciousness, almost always appears with a religious consciousness and with conservative social (as opposed to economic) morality. As already said, identity consciousness in South Africa is perhaps more accurately described as communal consciousness because of its more inclusive basis in what has already been termed "*value conservation*". This raises the interesting question of whether ethnicity on modern society tends to be left or right-leaning in its wider political commitments.

This chapter on the multi-variate analysis has the utility of having provided a rather clearer picture of how communal interests contrast with and combine with other interests. It has the added benefit of complexity. As political sociologists should know in advance, the world of everyday social interaction is the graveyard of over-conceptualised theory. Ethnicity and related issues of communal identity are confused and intertwined in society, but at the same time very resilient. It is clear that these sentiments in South Africa have survived Apartheid, and that conclusion alone would attest to the persistence of the phenomenon.

## CHAPTER 9

### MORE RECENT VIEWS OF WHITE AFRIKANERS AND OTHER SOUTH AFRICANS ON TRENDS IN SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGE POLITICS

In the preceding chapters one has seen some tentative indications of a hardening of ethnic attitudes among Afrikaners; indeed some of the data have suggested that emotions which would predispose to ethnic dissent may be crystallising or recrystallising in the consciousness of white Afrikaners. More recent empirical inputs may help to show what is happening and whether the tentative indications in the earlier chapters are part of a sustained process. The following sections are devoted to these more recent studies. As before, it is useful to compare the responses of White Afrikaners to those of other language groups in South Africa.

In February 1997, this author undertook a further nation-wide survey of the reactions of language groups in South Africa to the major trends in language and cultural policy and in particular to the "*nation-building*" agenda of the government and how it relates to cultural minority rights in the new democracy. This study was undertaken on commission by *MarkData* (Pty) Ltd., following a decision taken by an important gathering of concerned brown and white Afrikaans-speaking community-leaders and intellectuals at Oude Libertas in Stellenbosch on November 30, 1996, to discuss the situation of Afrikaans language rights. At the meeting a vigorous debate occurred between different viewpoints on the issue of whether or not the situation of Afrikaans was seriously threatened. At the meeting it was agreed that the debate should continue.

Professor Hermann Giliomee and others who were prominent in the initiative considered that a survey among all South Africans might contribute insights to the debate. The

necessary support from business sponsors was motivated, and this writer was requested to formulate a draft interview schedule for discussion with key persons involved in the initiative and the sponsors, after which MarkData (Pty) Ltd. was contracted to carry out the fieldwork under the supervision of the author. The writer undertook the analysis of the findings for reporting back to the sponsors, and the data have been further analysed for this chapter. The author would like to acknowledge the contributions of Prof. Giliomee and the others involved in this investigation.

The sample of slightly over 2200 was a multi-stage stratified probability design. The stratification factors were nine major residential categories and covered all South Africans, rural and urban. Personal interviews by trained fieldworkers were conducted in the home languages of all respondents during January and February of 1997. The questions posed are paraphrased. The interviewing approach to the study did not suggest that Afrikaners were the major focus of interest, and hence a possible Afrikaans ethnic bias was avoided as much as possible.

The survey was of an "*omnibus*" type in which, for reasons of cost-saving, items for other clients were also included in the investigation. Some of the items which will be analysed below were not part of the "*Oude Libertas*" investigation, but permission has been obtained to use them here. The results will be very broadly reviewed before concentrating on an analysis which is focused on the theme of this study.

The results show very extensive apparent disquiet over language rights among white Afrikaans-speakers. Some 83 per cent of Afrikaners declare themselves to be "*unhappy*" or "*very unhappy*" about the official treatment of both their cultural values and language, compared with 19 per cent among white English-speakers, 32 per cent among coloured Afrikaners and 23 per cent among Africans.

The results of a further question on the same topic are worth presenting in detail on a comparative basis:

**Table 29**  
*To what extent do you feel that the present government respects the interests of your preferred or home language? 1997*

	White Afrikaans	Coloured Afrikaans	White English	Africans	Zulus
Satisfactory	5%	33%	67%	41%	27%
As reasonably expected	11%	18%	19%	26%	30%
Pretends to	20%	23%	4%	24%	32%
Neglects	31%	13%	7%	5%	6%
Promotes another language	33%	12%	3%	3%	5%

NOTE: balance to 100 per cent is non-response or other answers.

Among all ethnic minorities, white Afrikaners feel the most threatened. No less than 84 per cent feel that the present government either does not "*respect*" the rights of their mother tongue as much as they could reasonably expect or else neglects and even positively undermines it by promoting another language, English. This 84 per cent compares with 25 per cent among Afrikaans-speaking coloureds, 10 per cent among white English-speakers and 8 per cent among speakers of African minority languages.

Compared with the only 16 per cent among white Afrikaners, roughly 50 per cent of coloured Afrikaans-speakers feel that their language is treated "*adequately*" or "*at least as well as one could reasonably expect*". The coloured Afrikaans-speakers, however, are not exposed to the full effects of new language policies and practices because the overwhelming majority live in the Western Cape, which is under opposition control, has a majority of Afrikaans-speakers and has a dominantly Afrikaans-speaking provincial government and civil service.

Black respondents, who comprise several language minorities are very much more optimistic or less-concerned about their language interests, as one might expect so soon after a "*liberation*" from a situation of racial domination in which language-based ethnic differentiation was far less salient than the major distinction between whites and people of colour. Nevertheless, as many as one-third feel that the present government is either insincere or hostile in respect of their minority language rights, and this proportion rises to over 40 per cent among Zulus.

As a consequence of their relatively heightened sense of ethnic marginalisation, some six out of ten Afrikaners (59 per cent) expect that their language will be weakened over time or become extinct, whereas only 18 per cent of coloured Afrikaans-speakers feel this way. In terms of the extreme fear of the language becoming extinct, coloureds are a little closer to white Afrikaners because 10 per cent fear that Afrikaans will disappear compared with 19 per cent in the white Afrikaans group.

Already, some 21 per cent of the white Afrikaans respondents and 37 per cent of the Afrikaans-speaking coloureds have decided that it would be best to have their children educated in an international language, namely English. The proportion among Africans is also high at some 36 per cent.

Thus there seems to be fairly widespread concern about language, but with white Afrikaners clearly most worried. This contrast obviously relates to the fact that Afrikaans, unlike the other languages, has suffered recent status loss (as opposed to the past and continuing neglect of the other minority languages). Up to 1994, Afrikaans was the predominant language of government and it had emerged as a language of academia, science, technology and the arts. Today it is surviving in private use, the print media and literature, but in most other respects it has been downgraded closer to the formal status of any one of the other nine minority languages, none of which has had the opportunity of being developed to encompass technological, professional and academic use.

While the other minority language users may complain justifiably of lack of progress in the development of their languages, for Afrikaners the problem is experienced as the actual destruction of advances already made. In politics, as in other spheres, one might have to consider that there is a difference in the effects on people of what they perceive as "*sins of commission*" compared with "*sins of omission*".

Surprisingly, however, Afrikaners can console themselves with the fact that many other South Africans sympathise with them in their predicament. When asked whether Afrikaans today enjoys "... *more or less than its rightful recognition*", no fewer than 48 per cent of white English-speakers and 37 per cent of blacks express the view that it is suffering discrimination. The accusation which is occasionally made that Afrikaans still enjoys more than its fair share of privileges is not as widely endorsed. Only 18 per cent of English-speakers and 31 per cent of blacks felt this way.

On this issue of discrimination against Afrikaans, white and brown Afrikaners are more united than they are on the issues already discussed. Some 88 per cent of white Afrikaners and, despite the linguistic privilege of being in the Western Cape, as many as 55 per cent of coloured Afrikaans-speakers feel that Afrikaans enjoys less than its rightful status in public life.

These perceptions may not be the stuff of which nation-building, reconciliation and the repair of the divisions created by Apartheid are made. One sees this in the fact that only 31 per cent of white Afrikaners feel that the various ethnic groups in South Africa have "*moved closer together*" over the past two years. This compares with 42 per cent among Afrikaans-speaking coloureds, the same proportions among Zulus, 49 per cent among English-speaking whites, 55 per cent among English-speaking coloureds and 53 per cent among blacks in general.

These results seem to illustrate the fact that, to the extent that the present government, semi-state agencies and other institutions have tried to foster national unity through playing down language and cultural differences or relegating them to the "*cultural sphere*" of

public life, which may be seen as a type of secondary status among the issues confronting the country, they could be risking reactions which are counter-productive for national unity, certainly as far as white Afrikaners, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans-speaking coloureds are concerned.

In general, not only white Afrikaners but all South Africans appear to favour a "*pluralist*" basis for national unity. When asked what broad approach to "*nation-building*" they favoured, as one would expect only 5 per cent of Afrikaners, but no more than 34 per cent of the entire sample of South Africans, endorsed the view that "*national unity should have priority over specific language interests*". Most South Africans seem to feel that unity and the maintenance of particular language and cultural interests are equally important, or that unity should actually be based on the protection of and co-operation between distinctive and acknowledged cultural and language interests: 53 per cent among all South Africans, 95 per cent among white Afrikaners, 66 per cent among coloured Afrikaans-speakers.

Nevertheless, as has happened so often in newly democratic multi-ethnic states, the fear is often expressed in government circles that ethnic claims represent a challenge to national unity (see the final chapter). However, despite their clearly evident ethnic commitments and their sense of cultural threat, only 23 per cent of white Afrikaners feel that their language and cultural interests should actually take precedence over national unity. They are joined in this conviction by a mere 10 per cent of all South Africans.

Hence, the majority sentiment among most South Africans is clearly that national reconciliation can be achieved while simultaneously protecting and promoting the rights and interests of cultural minorities. White Afrikaners are not dominantly at odds with this idea. It is against this background of perceptions that the decisions by government departments, some local authorities and some private corporations to move to the exclusive use of English may be problematic for national unity, and clearly not only with respect to Afrikaners. In the survey some 80 per cent of Afrikaners, 70 per cent of blacks and 72 per cent of South Africans in all categories said that being served or attended to in their own languages made a big or a considerable "*difference*".

As all these findings would lead one to expect, majorities of all South Africans feel that *"independent voluntary organisations to promote and protect their language and cultural interests"* are important -- overall 74 per cent of all South Africans. Surprisingly, the more intense expressions of this need are not limited to Afrikaners. While 43 per cent of white Afrikaners felt that this role of voluntary organisations is very important, the proportion is 41 per cent among black South Africans (49 per cent among Zulu-speakers) and 38 per cent among Afrikaans-speaking coloureds.

Such organisations, however, are not seen to be greatly effective despite their importance. When asked whether private voluntary organisations in the field of cultural and language interests *"act effectively or not"*, some 45 per cent of white Afrikaners, 37 per cent of coloured Afrikaans-speakers, 30 per cent of Zulus and 23 per cent of all blacks said that they felt such organisations were wholly or partly ineffective.

Among white Afrikaners, the same hesitations emerged in respect of a new statutory body established by government in terms of the new Constitution, a Council for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities. The establishment of this body flowed from a last minute inclusion in the new constitution strongly urged by Afrikaans-oriented political parties. While 80 per cent of all South Africans see the Council as capable of providing either effective or adequate protection of their language and cultural interests, the proportion drops to 56 per cent among white Afrikaners. The remainder of the Afrikaans respondents were cynical or critical -- some 17 per cent feel that it will actually weaken their interests, probably realising that the Council will to a large degree be self-neutralising because of the variety of cultural interests it will have to represent, and yet at the same time will allow government to claim that it is making important statutory provision for the protection of minority cultural and language interests. Some 81 per cent of Afrikaans-speaking coloureds appear to have faith in the Council, however.



On the face of it, these results suggest a potential for Afrikaans dissent if the politics of culture and language turn sour in South Africa. There is clearly a high level, possibly a groundswell of apparent concern among Afrikaners and very considerable sympathy for them among other groups, not to mention a measure of concern about their own languages among black minorities.

When asked how far voluntary cultural organisations should take their mandates to protect cultural interests, the white and coloured Afrikaans-speakers are very cautious, however:

<p><b>Table 30</b>  <i>How far should such (independent voluntary organisations) go  in the protection of language and cultural interests? 1997</i></p>					
	<b>White Afrikaans</b>	<b>Coloured Afrikaans</b>	<b>White English</b>	<b>Africans</b>	<b>Zulus</b>
Organisations not important	15%	32%	35%	28%	34%
Stimulate interest	33%	40%	40%	32%	23%
Make representations	29%	15%	19%	32%	33%
Organise strong protest	22%	14%	5%	8%	9%

Despite the strong apparent sense of ethnic threat, the proportions of white Afrikaners endorsing a recourse to strong public protest (22 per cent) is not large, although it is significantly larger than it is among all other groups. It indicates sufficient numbers to provide public support for activist movements, but it does not suggest a cohesive orientation among white Afrikaners as a group.

In the survey respondents were told about a proposal for the establishment of a new organisation for Afrikaans-speakers, which would operate across race groups and independently of political parties, in order to mobilise and act on behalf of Afrikaans and

its rights as a language. The respondents were asked whether they would become involved in such an organisation. The results were as follows:

**Table 31**  
**AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING SOUTH AFRICANS: DEGREE OF INTEREST**  
**IN BECOMING INVOLVED IN A NEW ORGANISATION**  
**TO MOBILISE AFRIKAANS-SPEAKERS AND ACT ON BEHALF**  
**OF AFRIKAANS LANGUAGE INTERESTS, 1997**

Response Category	Afrikaans-speakers	
	Coloured N177	White N255
Would support, become involved in local activity	12%	19%
Would support, become involved in national activity	11%	13%
Would support privately, no personal involvement	43%	49%
Support it conditionally	5%	10%
Uncertain	16%	4%
See no need for organisation	11%	3%
Undesirable and possibly detrimental	1%	1%
No information	1%	2%

At the meeting of concerned Afrikaans-speakers in Stellenbosch referred to earlier, some delegates expressed fears that the launching of a new Afrikaans initiative to promote and protect Afrikaans, albeit on a non-racial basis, would run the risk of antagonising the majority of South Africans. The results of the survey in general would not suggest this -- indeed as we have seen, it appears that there would be considerable sympathy among other groups for Afrikaans language action. In their responses to the question tabulated above only 10 per cent of all respondents and a mere 13 per cent among blacks felt that an Afrikaans initiative would be "*unwanted*" or "*detrimental*".

The two tables of results presented above suggest that short of a third of white Afrikaners would be prepared to become actively and openly involved in a new initiative to protect Afrikaans and short of a quarter would endorse going to the lengths of strong public protest in the pursuit of such protection. Therefore, as already suggested, the balance of opinions suggests that there would be enough support to make a movement impressive in absolute numbers but not enough to protect the hypothetical movement from criticism, and even opposition from within the ranks of white Afrikaners.

Support for these initiatives among coloured Afrikaans-speakers is at about two-thirds of the relative level among white Afrikaners. The same comments about a lack of consensus around an activist ethnic role as given for white Afrikaners apply in even greater measure to coloured Afrikaans-speakers.

Trends in the results not tabulated above suggest that upper-middle class and white collar white Afrikaners are somewhat less committed to organised action than blue-collar Afrikaners, although strong support is evident among semi-professionals, mainly teachers. The Afrikaans professional, business and executive class is fairly divided, in the sense that these categories contribute most of the rejection of the need for such an organisation but also contain substantial proportions that support it. Support is to some extent dependent on membership of one of the three traditional Afrikaans Calvinist churches -- Afrikaners who have no religious affiliation are less enthusiastic about the idea of the organisation proposed. It is interesting, however, that members of the rather fundamentalist or "*pietistic*" Afrikaans Protestant Church, the breakaway movement in protest against the liberalisation of the Dutch Reformed Churches (see earlier chapter), are less interested in active involvement in such an organisation than Afrikaners in the mainline Afrikaans churches. This may be a case of fairly fundamentalist religious convictions supplanting ethnic mobilisation?

The trends in the results not tabulated above show that coloureds, who are bilingual or who speak English at home, contain higher proportions who are opposed to the idea of such an

organisation than their Afrikaans counterparts, but nevertheless yield majorities who support organised action on behalf of Afrikaans, and these majorities are actually more intense in their support than coloured Afrikaans speakers. There is clearly a category of coloured people who have become anglicised but who have retained fairly intense feelings with regard to Afrikaans. Among coloured people the greatest support lies in the middle socio-economic categories with both very poor people and graduates least inclined to support the prospect of an organisation such as the one described.

Trends according to political party supported are predictable: the National Party supporting white Afrikaners are more likely to support the idea of the organisation than white Afrikaans Democratic Party supporters, but the strongest support comes from the ranks of the right-wing parties and Afrikaners in the dominantly traditional Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party. The few white Afrikaners who support the ANC are deeply divided, with a few endorsing the organisation very strongly but most rejecting it: the trends are based on a very small sample size, however, and are not reliable.

Among coloureds support for the organisation is as strong, if not stronger among ANC supporters, as among National Party followers, and there are sufficient numbers of coloured ANC supporters to make the trends meaningful.

The brief review of the survey results above suggests that ethnic consciousness is widespread among both white and brown Afrikaans-speakers, but that a more activist consciousness or a spirit of protest is a distinctly minority phenomenon. Ethnic dissent, however, is probably always a minority phenomenon until the prospects of success draw increasing numbers of supporters into the orbit of ethnic movement. This means, however, that ethnic movements in the early stages of mobilisation, or in the case of Afrikaners, re-mobilisation, have to survive lack of popularity and even opposition from within ethnic ranks for a protracted period. This situation places a premium on leadership. Because such movements are vulnerable to being discredited and discouraged because of the numerical marginality, it also means that the surrounding opportunities and constraints are crucial, as the theoretical discussion in chapter 2 has suggested.

This period of early incubation would also place a priority on the ideological coherence and sense of conviction among the rank-and-file supporters of such movements. The results as discussed cannot really indicate to what extent a coherent syndrome of disaffection is emerging. In order to investigate the patterns in the data more thoroughly, factor analyses were conducted on the results.

The rationale for employing factor analyses has been discussed in previous chapters and need not be repeated here. As with the factor analyses reported on in earlier chapters, the intention was not to test hypotheses, and hence the need was not for a very precise approach. The purpose was exploratory, with the main interest focused on the way in which sentiments combine to reflect the underlying coherences.

Two factor analyses were conducted. First, only the items included on language and culture were included. The items are not really suited to a factor analysis because they are not all strictly uni-dimensional and nor are they necessarily focused on Afrikaans but more on the issue of minority languages and cultures. Nevertheless, the items contain a sufficient range of content to allow ethnic "*ideology*" to be reflected if it exists, without placing great demands on the precision or "*purity*" of the data. The items are shortened and paraphrased for presentation in the text and factor analysis.

The factor analyses were run independently for all major race groups and for both white and coloured Afrikaans-speakers, but the results are discussed in detail only for Afrikaans Whites, and selected comparisons are made in respect of other groups.

The factor analysis, after varimax rotation, to increase the differentiation between underlying trends (see earlier discussion on factor analysis) yielded six factors among white Afrikaners, as follows (note: in the presentation which follows the variables are phrased in the "*direction*" shown by the sign of the loading of the items, and loadings of 0,25 and above on each factor are included). Readers should note that all the factors described below are relatively small minority-based clusters of sentiment; one is interested in the patterns

rather than in any quantification of the scope of the factors. The approach is interpretive rather than quantitative:

**Table 32**  
**FACTOR ANALYSIS ON LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL ITEMS:**  
**WHITE AFRIKANERS: 1997**

**FACTOR 1:**

*NATIONAL UNITY, EQUALITY AND LACK OF CONCERN WITH THE STATUS OF OWN LANGUAGE*

ITEM 1	National unity a priority as opposed to the survival and protection of language: 0,68
ITEM 7	Home language treated satisfactorily as opposed to the promotion of another language: 0,42
ITEM 11	Afrikaans enjoys more than its rightful share in official use, as opposed to being harmed by official policy: 0,53
ITEM 14	Languages can disappear but communities survive -- no need for concern: 0,37
ITEM 15	The future of own language so uncertain in the professional world that children should be educated in international language as opposed to mother tongue: 0,73
ITEM 16	Equal opportunities for all takes precedence over mother tongue and quality of education: 0,65

**FACTOR 2: ACCEPTANCE OF DEFEAT FOR OWN LANGUAGE**

ITEM 4	Voluntary cultural organisations not effective: 0,50
ITEM 8	English should take precedence in public broadcasting as opposed to equality for minority languages: 0,83
ITEM 9	English should take precedence in official communication over minority languages: 0,86
ITEM 7	Government trying to promote another language at the expense of home language: 0,30
ITEM 5	Voluntary organisations to promote cultural interests not important or necessary: 0,25

<b>FACTOR 3: <i>SENSE OF THREAT TO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE</i></b>	
ITEM 2	Own language seriously threatened with extinction: 0,76
ITEM 4	Voluntary cultural organisations not effective: 0,45
ITEM 7	Government trying to promote another language at the expense of home language: 0,53
ITEM 10	An official Council for the protection of language and culture will weaken language and cultural interests: 0,68
ITEM 11	Afrikaans being seriously harmed by recent government policy: 0,42
<b>FACTOR 4: <i>REJECTION OF NEED FOR CULTURAL MOBILISATION</i></b>	
ITEM 12	Organisation to mobilise on behalf of Afrikaans unnecessary or detrimental: 0,91
ITEM 14	Languages can disappear but communities will survive -- no need for concern: 0,34
ITEM 5	Voluntary organisations to promote cultural interests not necessary or important: 0,25
<b>FACTOR 5: <i>PRIVATE ETHNIC-CULTURAL SURVIVAL</i></b>	
ITEM 3	An Afrikaans organisation should stimulate interests in language and culture as opposed to protest: 0,84
ITEM 4	Languages may disappear but communities will survive -- no need for concern: 0,47
ITEM 5	Voluntary organisations to promote cultural interests not important or necessary: 0,38
ITEM 1	The protection of language and culture a priority over national unity: 0,30
<b>FACTOR 6: <i>PUBLIC WITHDRAWAL</i></b>	
ITEM 3	In interests of good relations and national unity no insistence on the public use of home language: 0,81
ITEM 5	Voluntary organisations to protect cultural interests not important or necessary: 0,44
ITEM 10	An official Council for the protection of language and cultural interests will weaken them: 0,29
ITEM 14	The active protection of a language should never be neglected: 0,29

These results are quite surprising. Of the six factors which the results yielded, five indicate tendencies toward the rejection of or withdrawal from ethnic commitment and the

promotion or protection of ethnic interests in the public domain. Factor 3 is an exception and reflects a strong sense of threat to language and culture, but it is not associated with those items which offered respondents an opportunity to support protest or mobilisation on behalf of ethnic culture. It is a fairly helpless sense of threat.

One may ask why this pattern of factors emerged when the results of individual items discussed above showed a MAJORITY perception of ethnic status loss among Afrikaners. Most of the focus and convergent responses in the factor analysis were towards the rejection of the ethnic cause, despite clearly evident disaffection among Afrikaners on most of the attitude items. The reason is that the more pervasive sentiments contained much inconsistent and divergent thinking -- something like a "*porridge*" of sentiment, and hence did not crystallise into clear convergences.

There is, therefore, little evidence of a consistent dimension of sentiment based on ethnic commitments with a corresponding inclination to activism and protest. Yet we know from the results of the items individually that some one-third of white Afrikaners would actively support an organisation to protect and promote Afrikaans and that some one-fifth would endorse strong action to the point of public protest. The fact that these dimensions did not crystallise in the factor analysis suggests that the activist sentiments are not part of a consistently ethnic "*paradigm*".

In other words, while a broad ethnic awareness and sense of cultural status loss exist among white Afrikaners, the inclinations to protest and mobilise among rank and file Afrikaners do not seem to flow from a consistency of responses or perhaps a strong sense of ethnic "*mission*". There seems, therefore, to be a weakness in the extent of convergent thinking or ideology at the ethnic level -- or a lack of focus in the ethnic "*script*".

One must be cautious here and ask whether the fact that the items were not really suited to the analysis might not have obscured the dimension in question. But the factor analysis produced a very coherent "*ethnic protest*" factor among coloured Afrikaans-speakers. The full results of the factor analysis for this group are not presented but one factor among



coloured people needs to be discussed in particular, if only to show up the lack of it among white Afrikaners on exactly the same basis of analysis.

#### **COLOURED AFRIKAANS SPEAKERS:**

##### **FACTOR 4: *ETHNIC ACTIVISM AND PROTEST***

ITEM 1	The protection of language and culture a priority over national unity: 0,62
ITEM 2	Own language seriously threatened with extinction: 0,44
ITEM 6	Organising strong public protests if cultural demands are not met: 0,70
ITEM 7	Government trying to promote another language at the expense of home language: 0,48
ITEM 12	Will actively support a (non-racial) organisation mobilising on behalf of Afrikaans: 0,58
ITEM 15.	The future of own language in the professional world so uncertain that children should be educated in an international language: 0,29

It should be noted that the "*activist*" items also crystallised in the factor analysis conducted for all Afrikaans-speakers, because the coloured respondents tipped the correlations in the directions indicated in the factor above. It is interesting that in the coloured group the response of educating children in English appears almost in the protest mode -- perhaps a matter of people feeling forced into this option because of the situation of Afrikaans.

Among black South Africans the activist ethnic factor also crystallised, as follows:

BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS:	
FACTOR 3: <i>ETHNIC ACTIVISM AND PROTEST</i>	
ITEM 1	The protection of language and culture a priority over nation-building: 0,61
ITEM 2	Own language becoming seriously threatened with extinction: 0.25
ITEM 6	Strong public protest if language and cultural demands are not met: 0,56
ITEM 7	Government neglects own language or promotes another language at its expense: 0,62
ITEM 12	Will actively support a (non-racial, non-political) organisation mobilising on behalf of Afrikaans: 0.60
ITEM 14	Active protection of a language must never be neglected: 0,26

Among the blacks another factor, factor 5 has a moderate loading on ethnic protest, but in the context of the other factors it appears to be linked to different sentiments (perhaps black nationalism, although there were no items to bring this out strongly) and to opposition to an Afrikaans organisation.

While one accepts that factor 3 among blacks is a small node of sentiment among the other orientations, it is interesting that it coincides so closely to the coloured ethnic response. It makes one realise that there is a small minority of blacks who speak fluent Afrikaans as a first or second language and that some kinds of associations between their own cultural interests and those of Afrikaners have taken root. One must also accept that the more progressive black radical or nationalist groupings would see this type of thinking as an advanced form of "*alienation*" or "*false consciousness*". But the presence of this factor among blacks makes the lack of it among white Afrikaners even more remarkable.

Among the white Afrikaners, then, the activist responses are present but are not consistent, coherent or related to an ethnic dynamic. Factor scores were calculated in order to relate the

factors to background variables. Among Afrikaners, factor 3 -- the ethnic threat factor, is associated with poorly-educated Afrikaners and mildly with tertiary education and with Afrikaners with high-school qualifications negatively loaded. This is an almost classic case of groupings in the intelligentsia finding common cause and possibly providing leadership to their ethnic co-members in less advantageous situations.

The factor tends to be associated with middle rather than lower income levels, so it is not associated with socio-economic deprivation, but rather with the self-reliant lower middle class or working class. It is negatively associated with the 18 to 24 year old youth, as well as with older people, and therefore, although not strongly age-related, it is associated with the middle ranges of age.

In terms of political sympathies, the factor is negatively associated with National Party support and positively associated with the Freedom Front, the party which espouses an Afrikaner homeland. It is also associated with people who refuse to divulge political support, and therefore is probably also associated with the more extreme right wing minority factions which are so controversial that people would rather not display their sympathies.

In terms of religion, the factor of ethnic threat is most strongly associated with tiny marginal groups like Catholics, Presbyterians, a minority among membership of the Afrikaans Protestant Church and people in small Evangelical congregations, rather than with the core Calvinist denominations. This ties in with previous findings which show that the large Dutch Reformed Church may tend to cushion ethnicity to the extent that it becomes latent.

Among coloured Afrikaans-speakers the ethnic activism factor has the strongest associations with lower and higher education, and negatively associated with the middle ranges of education -- a similar pattern as appears among white Afrikaners on the ethnic threat factor. Among coloured people it is has female associations and associations with 25 to 34 year old people, not with the very young adults as among white Afrikaners. Among

coloureds it has Northern and Eastern Cape and Free State associations more than with the Western Cape, where the stronger influence of the ANC among coloureds might tend to weaken it. It seems to be associated with unemployed coloured people, students and mildly with housewives as the gender trend would lead one to expect.

In terms of political affiliation it is very mildly associated with the very tiny Freedom Front supporting group and strongly with refusal to divulge political sympathies; here again suggesting that the sympathies are politically controversial. In terms of religion the factor of ethnic protest among coloureds is associated with Dutch Reformed Church membership, unlike among Afrikaners.

The factor scores among blacks suggest that the ethnic protest factor is mildly associated with higher education, with KwaZulu-Natal and the North West province, with self-employment and the informal sector, with the ANC, with the ACDP and the minuscule numbers of blacks who favour the right wing Freedom Front. The associations with religion are very mild except that some association exists with Dutch Reformed Church membership and more strongly with Anglican, Muslim, small Zionist groupings and Orthodox church membership; the latter being minuscule.

After this analysis, the issue of the protest consciousness of White Afrikaners and other groups was explored with a wider range of items in the same study, going beyond ethnic issues and into socio-economic and political themes. First the responses to the items included on a comparative basis are presented. In this presentation the tabulated results of questions already discussed under the preceding discussion of language and cultural issues will not be repeated.

**Table 33**  
**COMPARITIVE RESPONSES TO A RANGE OF SOCIO-POLITICAL,**  
**ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ITEMS: MARKDATA SURVEY:**  
**JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 1997, N 2200**

	White Afrikaans	White English	Coloured	Asian	Black
<b>Taking all things together in your life how would you say things are these days?</b>					
Very happy	5%	8%	5%	5%	10%
Fairly happy	52%	55%	45%	48%	44%
Neither	12%	14%	21%	14%	13%
Fairly unhappy	20%	18%	22%	24%	23%
Very unhappy	9%	5%	6%	8%	9%
<b>Over the past two years cultural and racial groups have:</b>					
Moved closer	31%	49%	43%	44%	53%
Relations same	31%	30%	32%	24%	27%
Drawn apart	38%	21%	22%	31%	19%
<b>How would you describe the life you are living now -- is your life:</b>					
Getting better	16%	27%	33%	26%	44%
Stayed same	40%	48%	35%	51%	29%
Getting worse	40%	24%	22%	21%	22%
DK	4%	1%	8%	-	3%
<b>As a South African with a particular language and cultural background, how do you feel about the way your cultural values and language are treated these days?</b>					
Very happy	2%	4%	3%	3%	11%
Fairly happy	7%	57%	39%	47%	53%
Neither	8%	19%	28%	22%	13%
Fairly unhappy	53%	16%	25%	20%	17%
Very unhappy	30%	3%	2%	9%	6%

(Note: In the following series only the fairly and very unhappy responses are presented)					
<b>How do you feel about the following aspects of life at the moment?</b>					
<b>Public affairs and administration</b>					
Fairly unhappy	49%	42%	30%	33%	27%
Very unhappy	18%	8%	1%	11%	6%
<b>Personal safety and security</b>					
Fairly unhappy	45%	38%	37%	39%	26%
Very unhappy	23%	32%	8%	23%	7%
<b>Your income and standard of living</b>					
Fairly unhappy	27%	25%	39%	35%	33%
Very unhappy	15%	8%	13%	27%	18%
<b>Future opportunities and prospects</b>					
Fairly unhappy	41%	25%	27%	24%	29%
Very unhappy	13%	16%	8%	20%	11%
<b>The way people like you are generally treated</b>					
Fairly unhappy	28%	14%	34%	26%	23%
Very unhappy	7%	9%	7%	13%	10%
<b>The overall performance of the party you have supported</b>					
Fairly unhappy	45%	27%	28%	38%	21%
Very unhappy	15%	11%	6%	9%	12%
<b>Taking all things together (again), how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days</b>					
Dissatisfied	19%	19%	32%	25%	30%
Very dissatisfied	4%	6%	3%	10%	7%

These patterns reflect the complex interplay of class, power, security and culture in South Africa's group-based politics at the present time. In their surface responses to these items, the white Afrikaners present an "*ethnic*" profile to some extent.

They are most likely to feel the sense of cultural threat and are most likely to feel that the groups in South Africa are drawing apart. The Afrikaners also lead the way in the perception of general deterioration of conditions and life chances -- things "*getting worse*", and in the perception that future opportunities and prospects are limited. These perceptions could also be in response to a sense of cultural siege.

But other variables show that the white Afrikaners face a situation of what one may call one of "*wide-spectrum*" threat. From this perspective one can describe the situation of the white Afrikaners and the other groups in a different way. If one for argument's sake takes a discontent level of below 40 per cent as some kind of cut-off, then one can describe the white Afrikaner as being in a sense of perceived threat or pressure as regards:

culture and language, security, standard of governance, political alienation, future prospects and at a lower level, income threat and a sense of general deterioration.

The heavy endorsement of the language threat may simply be because it is the most obvious change in the status of Afrikaners, but the perceived pressure on the group is multi-faceted.

The group (or set of groups) which is closest to the Afrikaners in the spectrum of perceived threats is that of Indians. The perceived threats are most marked in respect of security and material conditions, but standards of governance, political alienation and a sense of narrowing prospects make up the profile of pressure. The ethnic threat is not marked among Indians although more marked than average.

Coloureds, most of them Afrikaans-speaking or bilingual, have a narrower spectrum of threats. The leading perceptions are a sense of material deprivation, threats to safety and security, and a sense of invidious treatment. Among blacks the perception of deprivation is

even narrower, mainly material and a sense of narrowing prospects. The white Anglo-Saxons, the most affluent group, are generally least threatened except by the issue of safety and security, standards of governance and marginally a sense of narrowing future prospects.

The white Afrikaners, then, are in a perceptual sense, besieged from many sides. It is interesting, however, that the sense of threat does not invade the private sphere unduly, and they have the lowest sense of general life dissatisfaction. This factor of general dissatisfaction is highest among the poorer groups. Given this multi-faceted situation in the perceptual world of Afrikaners, the lack of crystallisation of the ethnic factor in the previous factor analysis makes sense.

A further exploration of the composition of white Afrikaner consciousness was explored in the second factor analysis, this time with the non-ethnic factors above combined with issues of language and culture.

Among white Afrikaners, the following FOUR factors emerged. Here again the items are expressed in the direction of the mathematical sign of the loadings:

**Table 34**  
**RESULTS OF SECOND SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL FACTOR**  
**ANALYSIS AMONG WHITE AFRIKANERS: JAN/FEB 1997 SURVEY**

**FACTOR 1: MATERIAL THREAT, INVIDIOUS OPPORTUNITY AND TREATMENT, AND GENERAL DISSATISFACTION**

- dissatisfaction with living standards: 0,76
- dissatisfaction with future opportunity: 0,75
- dissatisfaction with treatment: 0,73
- overall dissatisfaction with life: 0,67
- dissatisfaction with life at the moment: 0,55
- unhappiness with life: 0,41
- groups moving further apart: 0,39



**FACTOR 2: *ETHNIC THREAT***

- own language neglected by government, another promoted: 0,82
- Afrikaans seriously harmed by broadcasting policy: 0,78
- unhappy at treatment of language and cultural values: 0,63
- groups moving further apart: 0,47

**FACTOR 3: *LACK OF FAITH IN GOVERNMENT***

- cultural council will weaken language and culture: 0,78
- dissatisfaction with public affairs and administration: 0,71
- dissatisfaction with treatment of language and culture: 0,40
- dissatisfaction with personal safety and security: 0,38

**FACTOR 4: *POLITICAL ALIENATION***

- will not vote in future elections: 0,85
- dissatisfaction with political party supported: 0,57
- general unhappiness in life: 0,47

From this factor analysis it is clear that the addition of socio-economic and political items is necessary to create the greater variability necessary to place the ethnic factor among Afrikaners in context. The reader will recall that this factor in the previous factor analysis appeared to contrast with a number of anti-ethnic dimensions, but those factors assumed prominence in the absence of the political and material (class) items.

The most powerful factor is the first factor; that of generalised threat and invidious treatment with a strong material dimension. But the ethnic dimension emerges in the second factor, and it is relatively autonomous of material protest. Hence, as previous chapters have shown, an ethnic factor remains consistently present in the white Afrikaner consciousness, and it is not an accompaniment of material or power threats.

In this factor analysis we see evidence once again that the ethnic factor is present in the other groups in the society as well. Among Afrikaans-speaking coloureds and black South Africans the following "*ethnic*" factors are present:

**Table 35**  
**ETHNIC FACTORS EMERGING AMONG COLOURED AND**  
**BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS ON SECOND FACTOR ANALYSIS:**  
**MARKDATA SURVEY: JAN/FEB 1997**

**AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING COLOURED:**

**FACTOR 2: *ETHNIC DISSATISFACTION*:**

- own language neglected by government. another promoted: 0,80
- on language seriously harmed by government and broadcasting policy: 0,73
- unhappy with the treatment of language and culture: 0,59
- cultural council will weaken language interests: 0,40

**BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS:**

**FACTOR 3: *ETHNICALLY-BASED CONCERN WITH GOVERNMENT POLICIES*:**

- cultural council will weaken language interests: 0,65
- own language neglected by government. another promoted: 0,63
- priority for English in official use and minority language equality: 0,59 (this was a complex item and is not suited to the factor analysis - it scores towards language equality if people accept that English is a lingua franca)
- groups moving further apart: 0,54
- Afrikaans being seriously harmed by government policy: 0,41

Given that these results have demonstrated once again that ethnic dimensions are present among all South Africa's minorities (there is an ethnic factor which can be demonstrated for white, Indian and coloured minorities taken together which has not been presented for reasons of brevity), how do these factors relate to the "*activist*" items which were included in the previous factor analysis? Factor scores were calculated for a range of variables. One of the variables was on how far voluntary cultural organisations should go in acting on behalf of language and cultural interests, up to the suggestion of strong public protest.

The protest position has the following scores on the factors extracted:

AFRIKAANS WHITES
FACTOR 1: <i>MATERIAL THREAT AND GENERAL DISSATISFACTION</i> : PROTEST SCORE: 0,28
FACTOR 2: <i>ETHNIC THREAT</i> : PROTEST SCORE: 0.26
FACTOR 3: <i>LACK OF FAITH IN GOVERNMENT</i> : PROTEST SCORE: 0,28
FACTOR 4: <i>POLITICAL ALIENATION</i> : PROTEST SCORE: MINUS 0,32
AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING COLOURED
FACTOR 2: <i>ETHNIC DISSATISFACTION</i> : PROTEST SCORE: 0.91
BLACKS
FACTOR 3: <i>ETHNIC CONCERN WITH POLICY</i> : PROTEST SCORE: 0,18

These results in respect of whites and coloureds confirm exactly what was suggested by the previous analysis in this chapter, this being that the ethnic factor is not more "*activist*" in its implications than other factors of discontent among white Afrikaners. but it certainly is so among the small proportions of Afrikaans coloured "*ethnics*". The ethnicity factor is very weakly associated with an activist orientation among blacks.

The "*ethnic*" factor among coloured people needs some elaboration. It is qualitatively different to the ethnicity among white Afrikaners. Unlike the case among white Afrikaners it is not something associated with a type of "*high-culture*" consciousness. and it is most probably not experienced by coloured people as a "*cultural identity*". It is probably not an identity which has become "*mythologised*" or institutionalised, as in the case of white Afrikaners. It is a sense of group identity which has emerged from being sandwiched between whites and blacks, and from being socially distanced from both throughout history. It certainly does not mean that there is any common cause with white Afrikaners. It is a group-consciousness which one may perhaps describe as an informal or nascent

ethnicity, but it does have more militant or activist connotations than the more formal group identity among white Afrikaners.

The conclusion one reaches has to be cautiously stated. The survey results showed that more white Afrikaners than Afrikaans-speaking coloureds supported the notion of a strong public protest role for voluntary organisations: 22 per cent compared with 14 per cent. Hence the protest consciousness is more pervasive among white Afrikaners than among coloureds, but it is based on a mix of concerns about material interests, discontent over standards of governance, a sense of general dissatisfaction as well as ethnic commitments. It is also probably less militant among white Afrikaners than it is among the coloured people. Among the coloureds, the protest consciousness is also widely based on multi-faceted issues, but despite its lesser scope in the group, there seems to be a more coherent emotional or ideological "*node*" in which coloured ethnic identity is specifically associated with an activist consciousness.

If a coherence of ideas is more likely to produce active protest than a melange of discontents, which is plausible but arguable, then one could say that one is more likely to see protest of a latently ethnic type emerging among a small grouping of coloureds than among a relatively larger grouping of ethnically discontented white Afrikaners.

Finally, one must once again place the ethnic commitments of Afrikaners in a wider context to assess the weight which they carry. In the survey reported on, after the first question on general happiness with life or otherwise, an open-ended question was asked: "*What changes of any kind would make you feel happier with the way things are in your life -- what would be the most important change ...?*" It must be remembered that this question was asked in the context of a number of questions about politics, social and economic circumstances and cultural issues, hence it was not likely to have been interpreted in a personal or intimate context. The spontaneous answers classified in categories for the different groups are set out below:

**Table 36**  
**RESPONSES TO QUESTION ON CHANGES IN CONDITIONS WHICH**  
**WOULD INCREASE HAPPINESS: MARKDATA SURVEY: JAN/FEB 1997**

	<b>White Afrikaans</b>	<b>White English</b>	<b>Coloured</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>
Money and material issues	13%	14%	10%	14%	9%
Employment	4%	7%	24%	31%	30%
Housing	1%	2%	13%	5%	10%
Services	1%	1%	4%	2%	17%
Education	1%	2%	1%	-	7%
Welfare	1%	4%	1%	4%	2%
The economy	11%	12%	5%	4%	3%
Crime	20%	29%	10%	23%	2%
Political peace	13%	8%	8%	5%	1%
Religious	2%	-	2%	-	1%
Recreational	1%	2%	1%	-	1%
<u>Language and cultural issues</u>	5%	1%	2%	-	-
<u>Rights and justice</u>	15%	5%	11%	5%	7%
Other	2%	6%	4%	1%	2%

These results suggest that the issue of "*rights and justice*" in the table above is only partly a matter of ethnicity. An inspection of the detailed replies classified in this way suggest that among the coloureds, Indians and blacks it is a matter of concern over race discrimination, but among white Afrikaners about one-third of the replies under rights and justice seem to refer to ethnic in-group interests. If one combines this one third of the "*rights*" answers with the language and cultural concerns, then out of 100 per cent, a small minority of about 10

per cent of white Afrikaners express ethnic or group concerns in stating their expectations or desired changes.

This relatively low level of concern and commitment amidst all the other factors in a complex society is one of the realities of consciousness among Afrikaners. This issue will be revisited in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **THE MOST RECENT PROFILE OF AFRIKANER CONSCIOUSNESS**

On the assumption that ethnic activism may take time to emerge in situations of ethnic threat, it is useful before proceeding to draw conclusions to assess even more recent patterns of ethnic consciousness. A further nation-wide survey by MarkData (Pty) Ltd, among a sample of 2330 South Africans in June 1998 afforded this opportunity. Here again because items were included for purposes other than this analysis, strict comparisons with earlier items are possible in only a few cases, but as has been explained at the beginning of this text, the intention cannot be to achieve great precision. The broad dimensions of the phenomenon are of interest.

Among the sample was a sub-sample of 259 white Afrikaners and 170 coloured Afrikaans-speakers. The items used are only slightly summarised and paraphrased for discussion in the text. As with the previous chapter, broad comparisons are presented between the responses of major groups in South Africa. The characteristics of the sample are as presented before for the MarkData Omnibus surveys.

**Table 37**  
**PROFILE OF RESPONSES TO A RANGE OF SOCIO-POLITICAL AND**  
**CULTURAL ISSUES: MARKDATA SURVEY, JUNE 1998: N 2330**

	White Afrikaans	White English	Coloured Afrikaans	Coloured English	Indian	Black
<b>1. There is ample opportunity for all language groups to protect their interests in the New South Africa:</b>						
Strongly agree	5%	5%	12%	-	5%	20%
Agree	13%	24%	46%	54%	34%	45%
Neutral	7%	13%	8%	26%	10%	10%
Disagree	38%	39%	22%	11%	36%	13%
Strongly disagree	34%	16%	5%	4%	13%	7%
DK (don't know)	3%	4%	7%	4%	2%	4%
<b>2. People should try to be part of the New South Africa and forget their differences:</b>						
Strongly agree	19%	30%	42%	20%	33%	42%
Agree	38%	51%	49%	45%	58%	41%
Neutral	18%	9%	5%	24%	5%	5%
Disagree	17%	4%	1%	6%	2%	8%
Strongly disagree	6%	4%	2%	4%	1%	2%
DK (don't know)	2%	2%	1%	-	1%	2%
<b>3. Some Afrikaners express dissatisfaction about the treatment of their language and culture: How do you see the demands which are made?</b>						
Entitled to demand	87%	57%	74%	65%	25%	15%
Cannot expect special treatment	12%	40%	14%	11%	35%	54%
Past privilege means that others deserve more	1%	3%	12%	23%	39%	30%
<b>4. People like me will not be able to compete on a fair basis in future:</b>						
Strongly agree	34%	23%	12%	14%	18%	12%
Agree	35%	42%	31%	22%	47%	27%
Uncertain	2%	8%	13%	38%	6%	15%
Disagree	18%	21%	34%	26%	19%	32%
Strongly disagree	6%	5%	6%	-	9%	12%
DK (don't know)	5%	3%	4%	-	2%	3%



	White Afrikaans	White English	Coloured Afrikaans	Coloured English	Indian	Black
<b>5. Life is getting worse for people like me:</b>						
Strongly agree	49%	29%	19%	23%	47%	19%
Agree	37%	44%	38%	37%	26%	26%
Uncertain	4%	11%	7%	15%	7%	7%
Disagree	5%	12%	23%	19%	10%	30%
Strongly disagree	4%	3%	7%	6%	9%	16%
DK (don't know)	1%	1%	5%	-	1%	2%
<b>6. My main concern is my income and standard of living -- other things matter less:</b>						
Strongly agree	25%	18%	40%	20%	35%	31%
Agree	39%	35%	42%	48%	33%	37%
Uncertain	17%	8%	4%	26%	14%	6%
Disagree	14%	28%	10%	10%	11%	17%
Strongly disagree	5%	7%	4%	-	4%	7%
DK (don't know)	-	4%	-	-	3%	3%
<b>7. I have greatest confidence that as an individual I will be able to protect and advance my interests:</b>						
Strongly agree	8%	7%	24%	18%	26%	26%
Agree	24%	25%	36%	36%	34%	41%
Uncertain	9%	9%	13%	17%	13%	10%
Disagree	29%	41%	12%	23%	19%	15%
Strongly disagree	21%	15%	7%	6%	3%	5%
DK (don't know)	10%	3%	7%	-	5%	4%
<b>8. If you think about South Africans like you, which of the following describes their how they feel in general?</b>						
Mostly happy and satisfied	3%	9%	7%	6%	5%	20%
One tries to adapt	28%	26%	32%	26%	23%	29%
Hope for improvement	31%	25%	46%	44%	22%	37%
Conditions cannot continue - urgent action necessary	36%	37%	11%	25%	47%	12%
DK (don't know)	1%	4%	4%	-	4%	2%

	White Afrikaans	White English	Coloured Afrikaans	Coloured English	Indian	Black
<b>9. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the performance of government at present?</b>						
Very satisfied	1%	-	4%	-	2%	13%
Satisfied	16%	17%	34%	16%	15%	42%
Dissatisfied	40%	39%	50%	46%	40%	30%
Very dissatisfied	42%	41%	13%	33%	40%	14%
DK (don't know)	1%	2%	-	4%	3%	1%
<b>10. To what extent will you accept the outcome of the forthcoming (1999) elections?</b>						
Fully	38%	42%	69%	37%	36%	73%
Partly	40%	39%	25%	52%	45%	23%
Not at all	20%	18%	3%	11%	15%	3%
Uncertain	2%	1%	2%	-	4%	1%
<b>11. My vote will make no difference to my personal situation:</b>						
Definitely agree	40%	38%	17%	28%	44%	25%
Agree partly	33%	37%	28%	43%	29%	25%
Disagree	18%	15%	28%	26%	11%	26%
Definitely disagree	9%	9%	24%	3%	12%	22%
<b>12. My vote will make no difference to the situation in the country:</b>						
Definitely agree	34%	31%	15%	26%	29%	22%
Agree partly	31%	35%	19%	48%	31%	21%
Disagree	21%	18%	45%	14%	18%	26%
Definitely disagree	13%	16%	17%	11%	17%	29%
DK	1%	-	3%	2%	6%	3%
<b>13. How likely are you to vote?</b>						
Definitely	65%	51%	49%	8%	35%	64%
Probably	16%	20%	29%	58%	30%	18%
Uncertain	10%	11%	14%	17%	24%	6%
Probably not	3%	5%	-	-	1%	3%
Definitely not	6%	12%	1%	7%	4%	3%
DK	2%	2%	8%	11%	6%	6%

	White Afrikaans	White English	Coloured Afrikaans	Coloured English	Indian	Black
<b>14. Which of the following would you expect within South Africa in the coming years? Resistance or unrest:</b>						
Unavoidable	40%	20%	28%	16%	20%	9%
Very probable	25%	42%	22%	50%	10%	13%
Possible	25%	28%	25%	24%	41%	21%
Unlikely	6%	5%	18%	2%	7%	45%
DK	4%	6%	8%	7%	22%	13%
<b>15. Should people who have complaints, stand together as:</b>						
A group	92%	81%	84%	64%	89%	86%
Seek individual	7%	12%	16%	36%	8%	13%
solutions	2%	6%	1%	-	2%	1%
Uncertain						
<b>16. Think about the most serious problems you have mentioned. How do people like you feel about possible solutions? (For these serious problems see next table)</b>						
Resignation: solutions not possible	4%	7%	5%	-	-	4%
Draw to attention of government	15%	21%	22%	15%	15%	29%
Place strong pressure on government	50%	48%	45%	59%	65%	34%
People have to be patient	1%	2%	6%	1%	5%	20%
Co-operate to find own solutions	28%	17%	23	26%	13%	13%
Other	2%	5%	-	-	2%	1%

	White Afrikaans	White English	Coloured Afrikaans	Coloured English	Indian	Black
<b>17. Which of the following is the most serious or urgent problem of people in your position?</b>						
Financial/economic	17%	14%	31%	15%	15%	25%
Poor services	2%	3%	8%	-	3%	10%
Crime/unsafe	42%	56%	16%	53%	46%	18%
Treatment language and culture	3%	-	-	-	-	1%
Unemployment	17%	5%	35%	21%	9%	37%
Conditions/standards in schools	5%	6%	1%	7%	16%	5%
Affirmative action	9%	7%	5%	4%	6%	1%
Non-payment of rates and services	3%	4%	3%	-	1%	1%

On the face of it, the results to the last item suggest that ethnic concerns which item 1 showed to be pervasive among white Afrikaners, are not in the first line of priority. The 3 per cent spontaneous mention hardly rates as a groundswell. It may have risen if the option of second and third priorities had been given, but the intention was precisely to establish the very intensely felt priorities. The other comparisons in the table show that the concerns of white Afrikaners and of Afrikaans-speaking coloured people and all other categories tend to be shaped by their socio-economic circumstances or vulnerabilities as racial groups or minorities rather than by cultural identity.

It could be argued, however, that these non-ethnic priorities could be seen through a lens of ethnic consciousness, as it were, and hence acquire an intensity among people who have a sense of group identity, which may not be evenly spread through the society. The evidence for this is mixed.

White Afrikaners are no more dissatisfied by the performance of government than white English-speakers, Indians and only somewhat more than English-speaking coloured people. One may be dealing with an urban racial minority-based dissatisfaction more than anything

else. They are no more likely to say that they will not accept the forthcoming election results at all than white English-speakers, who have very few ethnic concerns to intensify their alienation. White Afrikaners are slightly more likely than English-speakers to feel that they cannot protect their interests as individuals, but the difference is hardly meaningful. On the question of the importance of incomes and standards of living, white Afrikaners are less likely to than English-speakers to reject the idea that materialistic concerns are paramount.

On the other hand, however, white Afrikaners clearly seem more likely to disagree strongly that "*There is ample opportunity for all language groups to protect their interests*". They seem more likely than all other groups to disagree with the notion that one should be "... *part of the new South Africa and forget ... differences*". With Indians, also a culturally distinctive minority, they are most likely to feel that their lives are getting worse. They also seem more likely than others to feel strongly that they will not be able to compete on a fair basis in the future, although the white English come fairly close to them in this fear, which means that it is probably based on a mix of culture, race and class considerations.

White Afrikaners, however, are no more likely to be developing an activist consciousness than other minorities. In item 8, above they are only somewhat more likely than English-speaking coloured people, no more likely than white English-speakers and less-likely than Indians to endorse "*urgent action*" in order to address grievances. In item 16, they are less likely than Indians and English-speaking coloureds, and about as likely as white English-speakers to endorse "*strong pressure*" on government.

Hence, in the evidence as a whole above, the white Afrikaans group, while showing an augmented sense of socio-economic and political threat in some respects, is not particularly distinctive in others. The impression of minority arousal is not stronger than among other minority groups like Indians and English-speaking coloured people. Among the latter two groups, the more angry or intense responses probably owe more to their politicisation by apartheid than to any ethnic consciousness.

But one has to bear in mind a feature that has been noted before in assessing empirical evidence, namely that the white Afrikaner ethnic consciousness may be a subset of the broader sentiment; it may be a vanguard or rearguard consciousness among a section of the white Afrikaans group. One has to explore the relationships between variables in the data to take the analysis further.

It will be recalled that relatively few white Afrikaners, namely 24 per cent, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the nation-building ideal: "*People should try to be part of the new South Africa and forget their differences.*" There is, however, fairly large variation in the results in terms of region. In the survey findings the proportion is some 39 per cent in the Western Cape and the Free State, 43 per cent in the North West and 63 per cent in the Northern Province. The proportions in the rural farming areas is 48 per cent. To some extent, then, a defence of ethnic identity is a regional phenomenon: it is characterised by those areas which had a strong and homogeneous Afrikaner political character before the end of white political domination.

But it also to an equal extent a class phenomenon. Among semi-skilled blue-collar workers it is high at 49 per cent, but it is very low among skilled blue-collar workers, who are presumably less threatened and insecure.

But neither the regional variations nor the class correlations are consistent across items. Overall some 34 per cent of white Afrikaners strongly disagreed with the statement that "*There is ample opportunity for all language groups to protect their interests in the new South Africa*", but it was higher among both artisans (60 per cent), executives (55 per cent) and clerks (45 per cent), and the regional variations do not relate to meaningful trends.

In response to the statement that "*Life is getting worse for people like myself*", (49 per cent strongly agree), the proportion in farming areas was lower (42 per cent) and in metropolitan areas higher (55 per cent). Both the low-income earners (R2500-R4160 per month) and the higher income groups (R8330-R16600 per month) yielded higher proportions feeling this way than the average among white Afrikaners.

Similarly, the fear that "*People like me will not be able to compete on a fair basis in the future*", with which some 34 per cent of white Afrikaners strongly agreed, showed indifferent regional variation and higher than average strong agreement among both semi-skilled and unskilled people (52 per cent) and professional and semi-professional groups (47 per cent).

In regard to the other items as well, there is little consistency in the patterns of responses by background or regional variables. This also applies to the evidence of a more activist consciousness, which is indicated by the "*urgent action*" response to item 8. above and the "*pressure on government*" response to item 16. Some 36 per cent of white Afrikaner overall endorsed urgent action, but this was slightly higher among both low income earners (45 per cent among R1250-R2500) and among high earners (43 per cent among R16600 plus), very low in the Free State (18 per cent), but very high among white Afrikaners in the Eastern Cape (56 per cent), which yielded bland responses on other items. The Eastern Cape white Afrikaners were also far more likely than average to endorse pressure on government (76 per cent as compared with 50 per cent on average).

Clearly, then, there is no coherent pattern across the country and across socio-economic groups among white Afrikaners. Hence if ethnic activism is developing, it seems not to be related to socially or geographically visible categories at this stage.

The sentiments may be part of cross-cutting attitudes, however. It is of interest, therefore, to look at the relationship between the "*urgent action*" response and other attitude responses. While some 36 per cent percent among all white Afrikaner endorsed "*urgent action*" in response to their problems, the proportion is meaningfully higher among certain attitudinal categories, as follows:

- "URGENT ACTION": OVERALL: 36%
- AMONG THOSE WHO DEFINITELY OR PROBABLY WILL NOT VOTE: 60%
- AMONG THOSE WHO FEEL THAT RESISTANCE AND UNREST IS UNAVOIDABLE: 56%
- AMONG THOSE VERY DISSATISFIED WITH GOVERNMENT: 55%

- AMONG THOSE WHO STRONGLY DISAGREE THAT THERE IS AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR LANGUAGE GROUPS TO PROTECT INTERESTS: 53%
- AMONG THOSE WHO STRONGLY DISAGREE THAT INDIVIDUALS CAN PROTECT AND ADVANCE THEIR INTERESTS: 51%
- AMONG THOSE WHO STRONGLY AGREE THAT LIFE IS GETTING WORSE: 49%
- AMONG THOSE WHO DISAGREE THAT SOUTH AFRICANS SHOULD BE PART OF THE NEW SA AND FORGET THEIR DIFFERENCES: 47%
- AMONG THOSE WHO ADVOCATE PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENT IN RESPONSE TO THEIR PROBLEMS: 46%
- AMONG THOSE WHO FEEL THAT VOTES ARE MEANINGLESS BECAUSE THE ANC WILL WIN ANYWAY: 47%
- AMONG THOSE WHO STRONGLY AGREE THAT INCOME IS THEIR MAIN CONCERN: 44% (THOSE WHO MERELY AGREE: 25%)
- AMONG THOSE WHO DISAGREE THAT THEIR MAIN CONCERN IS THEIR INCOME: 46%

This pattern suggests that the more activist response emerges from a mix of orientations, including sentiments associated with group identity but also with feelings of political powerlessness and general discontent with circumstances. The last examples above really illustrate the pattern -- both the materialists and the non-materialists embrace substantial proportions who feel that urgent action is necessary.

This is perhaps what one would expect, and once again there is no clear evidence that the ethnic response is associated with any greater activism than other forms of discontent. The reactions to the situation as depicted in the items reviewed suggest that, as with other South African minorities, Afrikaner are responding as a group motivated by material interests, feelings of political powerlessness and a range of other conditions as well as ethnic concerns. The ethnic concerns are not more intense or inclined to an activist response than the other concerns.

These results, as presented, show no meaningful shift towards a heightened ethnic protest orientation in the time which has elapsed. They are in the main compatible with, and indeed confirm the results in earlier chapters. But the pattern is undoubtedly complex and requires that a more sophisticated analysis be made than the comparisons above have allowed.



Therefore, once again a factor analysis was undertaken on these data, as undertaken in previous chapters, to explore the more detailed implications of the interaction between attitudes and sentiments.

Separate factor analyses were conducted for white Afrikaners, coloureds, Asians and white English. In the case of coloureds it was decided not to separate the group along language lines because of constraints on sample size.

As in the previous chapter, the items are restated to read in the value-direction of the mathematical sign of the statistical loading, and hence all the loadings could be stated as positive values. This avoids the difficulty of interpreting negative loadings. Among all the groups, five factors were sufficient to exploit the relevant content of the interactions in the data. Loadings of around and above 0,30 are taken to define the factors.

Among white Afrikaners, the following five factors were extracted after "*Varimax*" rotation to enhance the distinctiveness of the factors, as undertaken in previous chapters:

**Table 38**  
**WHITE AFRIKANERS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND ETHNIC**  
**FACTORS: FACTOR ANALYSIS ON SURVEY DATA OF JUNE, 1998**

FACTOR 1: (contribution to variance: 16%) <i>POLITICAL DISAFFECTION, ETHNIC PROTEST AND ACTIVISM</i>	
B3	RESISTANCE OR UNREST UNAVOIDABLE IN SA: ,77 (see comment on item below)
B5	CIRCUMSTANCES AND TREATMENT REQUIRE URGENT ACTION: ,68
B1	DISSATISFIED WITH PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT: ,60
A2	WILL NOT ACCEPT ELECTION OUTCOME: ,55
B2a	LIFE NOT IMPROVING: ,52
B2c	LANGUAGE GROUPS LACK OPPORTUNITY TO PROTECT INTERESTS: ,47
B9	THE AFRIKAANS LANGUAGE DEMANDS RESPECT: ,43
B2g	UNABLE TO PROTECT INTERESTS AS AN INDIVIDUAL: ,29
B13	WILL NOT VOTE: ,29

FACTOR 2: (contribution to variance: 14%) <i>DETERIORATING CIRCUMSTANCES, THREAT BUT AMBIVALENT ETHNICITY</i>	
B2b	PEOPLE LIKE ME UNABLE TO COMPETE: .70
B2d/a	LIFE GETTING WORSE/NOT GETTING BETTER: .68/.59
B2g	UNABLE TO PROTECT INTERESTS AS AN INDIVIDUAL: .56
B1	DISSATISFIED WITH PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT: .48
B2c	LANGUAGE GROUPS LACK OPPORTUNITY TO PROTECT INTERESTS: .46
B2f	CANNOT FORGET DIFFERENCES AS PART OF NEW SA: .33
B9	(AFRIKAANS LANGUAGE DEMANDS RESPECT: -.10)
FACTOR 3: (contribution to variance 10%) <i>POLITICAL INTEGRATION WITH MINORITY CONSCIOUSNESS</i>	
B11	VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE TO SITUATION IN COUNTRY: .83
A6	VOTE MAKES DIFFERENCE TO PERSONAL SITUATION: .82
B13	WILL VOTE: .38
B2f	CANNOT FORGET DIFFERENCES AS PART OF NEW SA: .33
FACTOR 4. (contribution to variance 9%) <i>POLITICAL AND ETHNIC RETREAT</i>	
B8	INDIVIDUALS SHOULD SEEK OWN SOLUTIONS. NOT IN GROUPS: .76
B7	PEOPLE HAVE TO RESIGN THEMSELVES TO PROBLEMS: .64
B9	BECAUSE OF PAST, AFRIKAANS DESERVES LESS ATTENTION THAN OTHER LANGUAGES: .48
B13	WILL NOT VOTE: .41
FACTOR 5. (contribution to variance 8%) <i>APOLITICAL MINORITY IDENTITY</i>	
B2e	MAIN CONCERN NOT INCOME AND STANDARD OF LIVING: .81
B2f	CANNOT FORGET DIFFERENCES AS PART OF NEW SA: .59
B2g	CANNOT PROTECT INTERESTS AS INDIVIDUAL: .40

Four of the white Afrikaans factors have ethnic or minority dimensions. The first factor points to an aggressive consciousness, with ethnic content as well as more generalised

dissatisfaction and activism. Curiously this dimension is not in opposition to the nation-building theme of playing down differences for the sake of new South African unity, but there is a fairly strong demand for Afrikaans to be treated with respect. It is possibly a factor in which strong protest and activism is aligned with a demand for the recognition and inclusion of the minorities into the collective whole. Factor one thus involves the blending of ethnic concerns and other dimensions of interest, with sharp discontent and a sense of urgency. It has a strong dimension of political alienation and it is also associated with the concept that upheaval in South Africa is inevitable.

Factors two, three and five are somewhat uncertain as regards ethnicity because they do not incorporate the demand that the Afrikaans language deserves respect, but they are associated with distance from the new South African unity ideal. They may be a white minority consciousness rather than an Afrikaans ethnic identity. Factor four, on the other hand, involves a withdrawal from any ethnic or minority commitments.

On the face of it factor one, with the exception of the fact that it is not opposed to the idea of nation-building within a more equitable system, points to a minority-based but substantial spread of consciousness aligned with the potential for coherent Afrikaans ethnic mobilisation. One must, however, look at selected factors among other groups to assess the relative gravity of the Afrikaans factors (only factors relevant to the theme are displayed).

Among blacks there is a strong dissatisfaction and protest factor, as well as a fairly apolitical ethnic factor:

**Table 39**  
**BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND ETHNIC**  
**FACTORS: FACTOR ANALYSIS BASED ON SURVEY OF JUNE 1998**

FACTOR 1: (contribution to variance, 15%)  
*ACTIVE DISCONTENT*

B2a/d	LIFE NOT GETTING BETTER/GETTING WORSE: ,79/.67
B1	DISSATISFIED WITH PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT: ,78
B5	CIRCUMSTANCES AND TREATMENT REQUIRE URGENT ACTION: ,70
B2c	LANGUAGE GROUPS LACK OPPORTUNITY TO PROTECT INTERESTS: ,36
A2	WILL NOT ACCEPT ELECTION OUTCOME: .33

FACTOR 3: (contribution to variance 10%)  
*ETHNIC MINORITY SOLIDARITY*

B2g	CANNOT PROTECT INTERESTS AS AN INDIVIDUAL: .71
B2f	CANNOT FORGET DIFFERENCES AS PART OF NEW SA: ,66
B2e	MAIN CONCERN NOT INCOME AND STANDARD OF LIVING: ,63
B2c	LANGUAGE GROUPS LACK OPPORTUNITY TO PROTECT INTERESTS: ,50

The results above are suggestive of an ethnic factor in factor 3 but factor 1 is probably based on a mix of socio-economic and identity protest.

Among coloured South Africans the following factors relevant to this analysis emerged:

**Table 40**  
**COLOURED SOUTH AFRICANS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND**  
**ETHNIC FACTORS: FACTOR ANALYSIS ON SURVEY DATA OF JUNE 1998**

FACTOR 1: (contribution to variance 18%)  
*ACTIVE DISCONTENT*

B5	CIRCUMSTANCES AND TREATMENT REQUIRE URGENT ACTION: ,79
B1	DISSATISFIED WITH PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT: ,76
B2d/a	LIFE NOT GETTING BETTER/ GETTING WORSE: ,76/,75
B2b	PEOPLE LIKE ME CANNOT COMPETE: ,53
A2	WILL NOT ACCEPT ELECTION: ,51
B3	RESISTANCE , UNREST UNAVOIDABLE: ,34
B13	WILL NOT VOTE: ,33

FACTOR 2: (contribution to variance 12%)  
*ETHNIC PROTEST*

B2g	CANNOT PROTECT INTERESTS AS AN INDIVIDUAL: ,81
B2c	LANGUAGE GROUPS LACK OPPORTUNITY TO PROTECT INTERESTS: ,70
B2f	CANNOT FORGET DIFFERENCES AS PART OF NEW SA: ,44
B2a	LIFE NOT GETTING BETTER: ,34
B9.	AFRIKAANS LANGUAGE DESERVES RESPECT: ,33

FACTOR 4: (contribution to variance 10%)  
*COLOURED INDIVIDUALISM, ANTI-WHITE*

B2f	MAIN CONCERN NOT INCOME AND STANDARD OF LIVING: ,75
B2f	CANNOT FORGET DIFFERENCES AS PART OF NEW SA: ,63
B9	BECAUSE OF PAST OTHER LANGUAGES THAN AFRIKAANS DESERVE MORE ATTENTION: ,57
A2	WILL NOT ACCEPT ELECTION: ,39
B8	INDIVIDUALS MUST SEEK OWN SOLUTIONS: ,38
B3	RESISTANCE AND UNREST UNLIKELY: ,32

Among coloureds there is also a political alienation factor, number 3, and a factor, number 5, which emphasises pressure on government, the need for individuals to seek own solutions and the prediction of unrest and resistance.

Among Indians a fairly similar pattern emerges with an active protest factor and what could be a minority solidarity factor:

<b>Table 41</b> <b>INDIAN SOUTH AFRICANS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND ETHNIC FACTORS: FACTOR ANALYSIS BASED ON SURVEY DATA OF JUNE 1998</b>	
FACTOR 1: (contribution to variance 22%) <i>ACTIVE MATERIAL PROTEST</i>	
B2d/a	LIFE GETTING WORSE/NOT GETTING BETTER: .84/.75
B1.	DISSATISFIED WITH GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE: .70
B5.	CIRCUMSTANCES AND TREATMENT REQUIRE URGENT ACTION: .68
B2b	PEOPLE LIKE ME UNABLE TO COMPETE: .68
B2c	LANGUAGE GROUPS LACK OPPORTUNITY TO COMPETE: .52
A2.	WILL NOT ACCEPT ELECTION OUTCOME: .44
B2e	MAIN CONCERN INCOME AND STANDARD OF LIVING: .31
FACTOR 3: (contribution to variance 9%) <i>MINORITY SOLIDARITY</i>	
B2g	CANNOT PROTECT INTERESTS AS INDIVIDUAL: .68
B2e	MAIN CONCERN NOT INCOME AND STANDARD OF LIVING: .67
B2f	CANNOT FORGET DIFFERENCES AS PART OF NEW SA: .67

In addition to these factors the Indians reflect a political alienation factor, a milder protest factor and a possible "*transformation*" or liberation factor reflected in the view that other languages deserve more respect than Afrikaans.

Among the white Anglo-Saxons a pattern similar to the Afrikaans factors emerges, with a very strong active protest factor, a political alienation factor and an ethnic factor with a strong element of solidarity with Afrikaans, which, of course, may be a racial factor. The relevant factors are:

<p><b>Table 42</b></p> <p><b>ENGLISH-SPEAKING WHITES: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND ETHNIC FACTORS: FACTOR ANALYSIS BASED ON SURVEY DATA OF JUNE, 1998</b></p>	
<p>FACTOR 1: (contribution to variance 20%)</p> <p><i>ACTIVE PROTEST</i></p>	
B2d/a	LIFE GETTING WORSE/NOT GETTING BETTER: .80/.79
B2c	LANGUAGE GROUPS LACK OPPORTUNITY TO PROTECT INTERESTS: .68
B5	CIRCUMSTANCES AND TREATMENT REQUIRE URGENT ACTION: .61
B2b	PEOPLE LIKE ME UNABLE TO COMPETE: .63
B1	DISSATISFACTION WITH GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE: .60
B2g	CANNOT PROTECT INTERESTS AS AN INDIVIDUAL: .58
<p>FACTOR 2: (contribution to variance 11%)</p> <p><i>POLITICAL ALIENATION WITH MILD PROTEST</i></p>	
A6	VOTE MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO PERSONAL SITUATION: .80
B11	VOTE MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO SITUATION IN COUNTRY: .79
B13	WILL VOTE: .41
B5	CIRCUMSTANCES AND TREATMENT REQUIRE URGENT ACTION: .32
B2e	MAIN CONCERN NOT INCOME AND STANDARD OF LIVING: .30
<p>FACTOR 3: (contribution to variance 10%)</p> <p><i>POLITICAL ALIENATION AND AFRIKAANS ETHNIC ASSOCIATION</i></p>	
A2.	WILL NOT ACCEPT ELECTION OUTCOME: .75
B9.	AFRIKAANS LANGUAGE DESERVES RESPECT: .66
B3.	RESISTANCE AND UNREST UNAVOIDABLE: .57
B13.	WILL NOT VOTE: .41
B1.	DISSATISFIED BY PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT: .29

FACTOR 4: (contribution to variance 10%)  
*INDIVIDUAL ALIENATION WITH SOME ETHNIC OR RACIAL CONTENT*

B2f	CANNOT FORGET DIFFERENCES AS PART OF NEW SA: ,64
B2e	MAIN CONCERN NOT INCOME AND STANDARD OF LIVING: ,61
B8	INDIVIDUALS MUST SEEK OWN SOLUTION NOT IN GROUPS: ,56
B13	WILL NOT VOTE: ,40
B9	OTHER LANGUAGES DESERVE MORE ATTENTION THAN AFRIKAANS: ,37
A2	WILL NOT ACCEPT OUTCOME OF ELECTION: ,32

One of the noteworthy aspects of the factor analyses is that most of the factors are either neutral or structured around dissatisfaction with the current situation. One knows that this does not reflect the overall pattern of attitudes in the country, because there is after all a very large majority which supports the present government and its programmes. The factor analysis among blacks has produced a positive dimension but it has rather weak loadings and is weaker in its contribution to variance explained than the factors which have been set out in the text.

What it does mean, however, is that the positive attitudes have less focus than the negative views. There is less crystallisation of tendencies or "*ideologies*", as it were among the positive sentiments; they are much more like a kind of "*porridge*" of optimism. Furthermore, it has to be borne in mind that the items used in the factor analysis did not serve to stimulate the feel-good factor in politics. One must be cautious therefore, not to use the factor analyses as a picture of the entire spectrum of political attitudes but only for the purpose for which it has been employed here; this being to attempt to understand the interaction between ethnic sentiment, minority sentiment and responses based on other interests.

In this context one may begin to draw the tentative conclusion that a strong active protest consciousness is part of the attitudinal dynamic across all minority groups, and that it has "*ethnic*" content or tinges among all these groups. Here we see an illustration once again



that white Afrikaners, the primary focus of this study, are not markedly more inclined to have developed a coherent ethnic mind-set relevant to their political situation than other minorities in the population. To put it differently, while Afrikaners doubtlessly have a more coherent sense of identity at the social level than other minority groups, this identity is not necessarily more "*engaged*" in a political sense than the less formalised identities of the other minorities.

It is interesting, for example, that the strongest loading on the protection of Afrikaans language interests is found in a factor in the white English category, and that this item has a loading on one of the factors among coloureds which is not markedly weaker than that among white Afrikaners.

The strongest factor among Afrikaners, the mix of political protest and ethnic commitment (Factor 1 described as "*political disaffection, ethnic protest and activism*"), suggests that the evidence in the previous chapter has either been modified by more recent trends or that the items used in the factor analyses in the previous chapter did not bring it out. They should have, however, since they were no less constrained than those used this chapter. Perhaps the convergence of political, socio-economic and ethnic sentiment which was hinted at as a possibility in the earlier chapters is beginning to occur. One may just be beginning to see a crystallisation of ethnic reaction which in the earlier studies was submerged in confusion associated with rapid change.

One has to inspect this factor more closely, therefore, to see what it is associated with. As before factor scores were calculated for all the biographical variables, on political party choice and on an item on the most urgent problems identified by respondents.

**Table 43**  
**WHITE AFRIKANERS: ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN THE FACTOR OF**  
**POLITICAL AND ETHNIC PROTEST AND ACTIVISM AND OTHER**  
**VARIABLES, BASED ON FACTOR SCORES**

A. Subgroups with higher than average factor scores on factor:	
<u>ALL AFRIKANERS:</u>	,04
RURAL DWELLERS:	,31
WESTERN CAPE:	,26
NORTHERN CAPE:	,31
NORTHERN PROVINCE:	,46
FARMERS:	,30
MANAGERIAL:	,26
SKILLED MANUAL:	,34
SEMI-SKILLED:	,53 (very small sample)
SELF-EMPLOYED:	,15
R8000-R16000PM:	,44
<R1250PM:	,51
NON-TELEVISION VIEWERS:	,29
SA DRAMA ON TV:	,35
MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM:	
- financial:	,23
- language/culture:	,41
- affirmative action:	,27
POLITICAL PARTY SUPPORTED:	
- Freedom Front:	,21
- Conservative Party:	,24
- AWB:	,84 (small sample)
- will not vote:	,75
- uncertain, DK:	,53
35-49YRS:	,16
<STD 10:	,32

B. Subgroups with lower than average factor scores on factor:	
<u>ALL AFRIKANERS:</u>	,04
EASTERN CAPE:	-,26
FREE STATE:	-,34
KWAZULU-NATAL:	-,20
GAUTENG:	-,16
NORTH WEST:	-,15
STUDENTS:	-,75
PROFESSIONALS:	-,52

INSPECTIONAL OCCUP: EDUCATION A SERIOUS PROBLEM:	-,19 -,55
DP SUPPORTERS; ANC/SACP: IFP	-,19 -1,70 -,33
R1250-R2500PM: TERTIARY EDUCATION:	-,17 -,32

The picture that emerges is that the factor is strongly regional in the sense that it is most powerful in those provinces in which a strong conservative or established Afrikaans culture exists. It withers in the melting-pot provinces or in those areas in which conservative black leadership is prominent, like KwaZulu-Natal. It does not only pervade the poorer groups but is strong in the self-made categories of managers, self-employed businessmen and higher blue-collar workers. It is negated by the values and environment of tertiary education. As a tendency in the Afrikaans community it is therefore weak on intellectual leadership.

The factor which is strongest among the university-trained Afrikaners is Factor 3, which was described as composed of political system acceptance, a lack of protest consciousness and a rather mild rejection of the notion of submerging cultural differences for nation-building. The tendency among the Afrikaans intelligentsia therefore would be a type of mildly equivocating commitment to both political correctness and ethnic preservation. As will be pointed out in the final chapter, this accords well with observable reality.

While the results reviewed have been limited by constraints on the scope of the research, in particular in terms of the range of items available for analysis from survey results, the trend is nonetheless clear, and tends on the whole to confirm the pattern observed in earlier chapters. There is very little evidence of anything resembling a "pure" ethnic dissent among Afrikaners, and their protest consciousness, which appears to be growing, is based on a mixture of ethnic concerns and concerns which may be described as the concerns of a

political minority in a system in which a demographic majority-based party appears to the minority to be well-nigh hegemonic. This reaction among Afrikaners goes a long way to explaining why in the 1999 elections, ethnic Afrikaners were so easily able to shift their allegiances to an English-language aggressive liberal protest party -- the Democratic Party. The more strictly-based dimensions of Afrikaner ethnicity are weaker and are less "*activist*" in their flavour, but there is strong evidence of an ethnic consciousness within generalised protest and activism, to the extent that it exists among Afrikaners.

## CHAPTER 11

### FINAL EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTION: THE ANATOMY OF SUPPORT FOR A VOLKSTAAT

The most focused, and certainly the most far-reaching aspiration among ethnically mobilised Afrikaners is for the recovery of the distinct and unambiguous self-determination that a separate and autonomous territorial dispensation for Afrikaners could establish. As indicated in chapter five (5.4), a Volkstaat Council was established as a statutory body as part of the "*pacification*" of right-wing Afrikaners during the negotiations over the transition to majority rule.

One of the major mandates of the Council was to establish the level of support among Afrikaners for a form of territorial self-determination in a Volkstaat. This level of support was to be incorporated as evidence in the final submission to the government on the Council's arguments in respect of the Volkstaat. Very few observers of the South African political situation have ever believed that the ANC-led government would voluntarily agree to the creation of a Volkstaat, not only because of an ideological opposition to the idea, but because it would establish a precedent which other regional minorities, like traditional Zulus in the former colonial Zululand, for example, might wish to exploit.

Nevertheless, having agreed to the Volkstaat Council as a strategy to defuse tensions, the government has been obligated to allow the Council to go through the motions of its mandate and to receive a report on the investigation. The objective of establishing the strength of support for a Volkstaat has in the process, however, provided some interesting data on the aspiration to self-determination among Afrikaners, which forms the basis for this final empirical chapter.

Considerable uncertainty has existed as regards the likely extent of support for a Volkstaat among white ethnic Afrikaners. Members of the Afrikaans intelligentsia are themselves divided in their assessment of the strength of support. It is not uncommon for prominent Afrikaans professionals, academics and businessmen to dismiss the Volkstaat support as insignificant and marginal in the political debate. Other experienced observers, however, argue that a considerable extent of covert support for the concept of a Volkstaat exists; support which is not necessarily openly displayed because it is felt to be politically incorrect or inappropriate in the current social and political climate.

The decision by the Volkstaat Council to commission research into the extent of support is, presumably, a major contribution to the base of empirical and verifiable knowledge on an important aspect of the debate about the future of Afrikaans nationalism in the new dispensation.

Two surveys were in fact undertaken by the Council; one in late 1995, and the second in late 1998. While this review of the research will concentrate on the 1998 study, a brief comparison between the two surveys is possible to establish whether or not any trend in support is evident.

In both of the studies this author was engaged as a co-researcher/consultant on the projects. The main researcher was Dr. Steyn Steenekamp, the Managing Director of the firm *Opdatum Opnames* ("Up To Date Surveys"), a firm which specialises in consumer research among Afrikaans communities. This author, aside from participating in the conceptualisation of the studies, was called upon by the Council to review and evaluate the research.

## 11.1 THE METHODOLOGY

The survey of attitudes and perceptions of a "Volkstaat" conducted in late 1998 followed the same broad methodology and procedures as those of the 1995 study. Direct

comparisons between the results of the two surveys are possible only to a limited extent, however, because of changes to the interview schedule used in the latest survey.

In the previous survey in 1995, a number of quite crucial questions relating to support for a Volkstaat under certain conditions were follow-up questions to a general item which established the extent of support for the broad principle or "*concept*" of a Volkstaat. The generality of the introductory question was such as to possibly inflate the extent of support which the results reflected. In the most recent survey a more "*conservative*" approach was adopted in which the respondents were asked about their reservations about a Volkstaat, and the follow-up questions were directed at assessing levels of support if the reservations were to be addressed. While the 1995 results were meaningful if interpreted correctly, the latest results provide a more cautious and firmer basis for assessing the extent of support for the political possibility of an ethnic territory or state.

The methodology in general was appropriate and suited to the topic. The study was limited to Afrikaans-speakers in three regions: the Pretoria Metropolitan region, the "*Bushveld*" regions encompassing towns and farms in a wide band between Warmbaths and Potgietersrus in the Northern Province, and the "*Drakensberg*" region of Mpumalanga, encompassing towns and farms between Bronkhorstspuit and Balfour all the way East to the Swaziland and Mozambican borders. The areas were defined on the basis of the fact that they covered or were adjacent to areas that were being considered as possible districts in which Afrikaner self-determination could be established. The regions, therefore, are those which are probably most likely to contain persons sympathetic to the Volkstaat idea. The study did not attempt to generalise for white Afrikaners throughout South Africa. Being concentrated in three large regions in which conservative Afrikaans-speakers are a substantial majority among whites, it does, however, generalise for a reasonably large proportion of white Afrikaners in the country, certainly in the Northern areas.

The sample sizes were Pretoria: 402, Mpumalanga (Drakensberg North): 200, Bushveld: 103, Total: 705.

The vast majority of the respondents were white and Afrikaans-speaking, but the sample was not drawn on a racial basis. The fact that the interviews were conducted telephonically would have meant that a coloured person in the regions surveyed who was Afrikaans-speaking, would have been included in the normal course of the fieldwork. The sample can be regarded as a non-racial sample of Afrikaans-speakers in the regions selected, the vast majority of them white.

The use of telephone interviews has become increasingly common in opinion survey work throughout the world -- in the USA and Europe these days virtually all polls are telephone polls. Because of security systems at farms and private middle class homes, researchers are finding increasingly that telephone polling gives better sampling returns than personal visits. Telephone polling tends to under-estimate very poor people who are not telephone subscribers, but since the study was directed at a category of people who are almost exclusively the established working class or the middle class, this was not a problem for the study. Telephone polling also underestimates very recently mobile people who do not have phones, but this would have had a very minor effect in the sample.

In telephone polling, there may be a tendency for respondents to be more cautious and non-committal. The results of this study suggest that this was not a serious impediment. If anything, however, the use of the telephone technique will tend to slightly underestimate support for any ideas deemed to be controversial, and for this reason the levels of support for a Volkstaat as reflected in the study may be close to the minimum levels in the communities surveyed.

The sampling technique was that of systematic (interval) sampling from private entries in the relevant telephone directories. This is an acceptable alternative to random sampling and because telephone numbers are randomly assigned, the method avoids any noteworthy bias. Non-Afrikaans speakers appearing in the systematic selection were excluded at the point of interview, in order to generalise for an ethnic category, as the research brief directed. It should be noted, however, that in the earlier survey English-speaking whites were included,



but separately categorised, which provided an interesting insight which will be detailed in due course.

One last point on the methodology; because the fieldwork was conducted by an Afrikaans firm, and because the study was introduced as being a project of the Volkstaat Council, right-wing Afrikaners would have felt rather more at ease and hence would have been more frank and open in the interviews than they might have been in a standard investigation by a typical opinion polling organisation.

## 11.2 THE RESULTS OF THE 1998 STUDY BRIEFLY DESCRIBED

The results in this brief review will be summarised for Pretoria and for the total sample of three areas. Pretoria on its own is of interest because, being the capital city the residents are well exposed to viewpoints alternative to those of Afrikaans nationalism.

### 11.2.1 SUPPORT FOR THE CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLE OF CULTURAL SELF-DETERMINATION

The principle of self-determination appears to be widely accepted. In response to the question of whether or not Afrikaners had the *"right to make claims to self-determination"* (*"aanspraak maak"*), some 76 per cent of Pretoria and 78 per cent of the total sample answered in the affirmative. Only 13 per cent and 11 per cent respectively were opposed to the right to make such claims, with the balance uncertain.

A more specific early question posed was whether there should be *"a part or parts of South Africa with significant autonomy in which Afrikaners could enjoy a great deal of self-determination"*. Some 42 per cent of Pretoria and 47 per cent of all respondents endorsed the proposal fully, and 26 per cent and 25 per cent respectively endorsed it to some extent. Hence a broadly supportive response to the

concept of territorial self-determination was obtained from 68 per cent and 72 per cent of the Pretoria and total samples respectively. One can assume that between two-thirds and three quarters of Afrikaners in the regions surveyed have sentiments in favour of ethnic self-determination.

The question immediately above was posed in exactly the same way in the 1995 survey, and a strict comparison for Pretoria is possible. Full and unqualified support for some form of geographic self-determination increased from 33 per cent in late 1995 to 42 per cent in 1998. Obviously one must be cautious about generalising from this but the comparison suggests an increase in support for the notion of self-determination.<sup>15</sup>

It will be noted from the results already presented that the results for Pretoria are slightly less positive than those in the non-metropolitan regions surveyed. This is not a rural-urban difference, but is due to the fact that the upper middle class areas in Southern Pretoria, in which the proportions of graduates is significantly higher than in the Northern areas, are relatively less inclined to endorse ethnic self-determination, thereby lowering the overall support in Pretoria.

Full support for the principle of an area in which Afrikaners could exercise rights to self-determination varied as follows between categories of respondents:

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<sup>15</sup> It is conventional to use tests of statistical significance in comparisons such as these but the design of the samples, being stratified, multi-stage samples with a single respondent selected per household in the final stage, do not match the assumptions of most conventional tests. It is wiser simply to be cautious, accepting the result as suggestive of an increase in support for the notion of self-determination. One may assume that broad in-principle support for ethnic autonomy is tending to strengthen rather than weaken.

**Table 44**  
**VARIATIONS IN SUPPORT FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF A VOLKSTAAT:**  
**VOLKSTAAT SURVEY, 1998**

Full support: entire sample (n 705):	47%
Full support in sub-categories:	
Household income <R 48 000 pa:	54%
>R 96 000 pa:	34%
High school qualifications:	55%
Graduates:	37%
University Students:	26%
NG Church:	42%
Gereformeerde Church:	50%
Hervormde Church:	60%
Afrikaans Protestant Church:	56%
Other Churches:	46%

The drop-off in support for the principle is noteworthy among the more highly educated, the upper middle class and among students. The influence of religious denomination is also quite marked, with the members of the largest and least fundamental Afrikaans Church (in a theological and in a political sense), the NG Church, clearly less committed to the notion of self-determination.

These findings support many other findings, some referred to in earlier sections, which show that the Afrikaans "*intelligentsia*" (loosely described) is fairly deeply polarised around the issue of Afrikaans ethnic and cultural claims.

#### 11.2.2 REALISTIC DOUBTS AND RESERVATIONS

When asked whether they had any reservations or doubts about the concept of a Volkstaat, most respondents agreed that the idea has its problems. Only some 31 per cent of Pretoria and 29 per cent of all respondents had no doubts or reservations.

The doubts and reservation were the same as those expressed in the 1995 investigation, namely concerns among respondents that:

- they would have to relocate to enjoy the benefits of autonomy;
- that a Volkstaat would be economically non-viable;
- that it was politically unrealistic, since the government was unlikely to allow the initiative to develop;
- that an area or areas for a Volkstaat would be isolated and lack infrastructure and services, and;
- (among a very small minority) that a Volkstaat would imply relinquishing claims by Afrikaners to self-determination in the whole of South Africa.

In the interviews, however, each of the doubts was taken and the question posed as to whether or not the respondents would support a Volkstaat if the major problems they discerned could be solved or minimised. After such hypothetical qualifications and assurances, the (hypothetical) expression of approval of the aim of a Volkstaat rose to some 65 per cent, or 70 per cent if one includes people who supported the idea but believed that the practical problems were totally insurmountable. In the Pretoria sample, the support rose to 61 per cent and up to 67 per cent if the sympathizers with serious doubts about its practicality are included.

### 11.2.3 THE EXTENT OF FIRM RESISTANCE TO THE IDEA

It has been noted that some categories of respondents could not endorse either the principle or the practicalities of a Volkstaat, even when problems and concerns had been hypothetically addressed. Some of this lack of support was due to uncertainty, however. Some 15 per cent of the entire sample were opposed to the idea of Afrikaner self-determination in principle. Within this proportion, however, only 8 per cent in Pretoria and 6 per cent in the entire sample said that they would actively oppose moves to establish a Volkstaat should these eventuate.

#### 11.2.4 THE BASIS OF THE ASPIRATIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION

The roughly two thirds of respondents who endorsed rights to self-determination and the aims of a Volkstaat, fully or partially, were asked about the issues in respect of which self-determination was necessary or desirable. The probes were both open-ended and based on the presentation of fixed-answer alternatives.

The dominant considerations expressed or selected were not necessarily ethnic or "*cultural*". The major motivations appear to relate to the current state of the economy, to levels of crime, to standards in public health care, to educational standards and to the official "*equity*" or affirmative action policy which was being introduced at the time of the survey.

This is not to say that cultural motivations were unimportant. Some 36 per cent of the Pretoria sample and 30 per cent of all respondents were motivated by cultural and ethnic-religious concerns, and 37 per cent and 48 per cent respectively by a concern about the future of Afrikaans education -- obviously these concerns could overlap with each other, and with security and economic concern since respondents gave more than one response to the question on their motivations. Since the ethnic motivations were always mentioned in association with other considerations, it is impossible to discern any differences in attitudes to self-determination between those motivated by cultural concerns and those motivated by other concerns.

It is important to note, however, that only some 10 per cent of respondents gave culture or language as their first reason for aspiring to or endorsing the idea of self-determination. The mention of culture or language tended to be more prominent in Pretoria and among the better-educated supporters of the Volkstaat idea.

An interesting pattern emerged in the results of the 1995 Volkstaat study, in that at least 40 per cent of English-speaking whites interviewed in Pretoria endorsed and expressed their support for the idea of a Volkstaat. Some of them, perhaps a third or

more, had feelings of identification with Afrikaners or with Afrikaans culture, but most of these English-speakers aspired to a Volkstaat for reasons associated with a desire to restore white racial control, not because they were nakedly racist, but because they had no faith in the future under majority rule.

In a sense these English-speakers give the game away. The issue of a Volkstaat, among both Afrikaans and English-speaking whites, is more likely to be supported in reaction to majority rule and its perceived consequences than it is likely to be supported for reasons of ethnic and cultural self-determination.

#### 11.2.5 PERVASIVE PESSIMISM ABOUT THE FUTURE

It follows from the last comment that the most powerful factor driving the search for an alternative dispensation is a pervasive sense of uncertainty about the future. In 1995, only 24 per cent of the Pretoria respondents felt positive about the future. At the time there was the possibility that the pessimism was due to the rapid political transformation and shift of power that had taken place the year before, with an accompanying sense of status-loss for Afrikaners. The sentiments, therefore, might have been expected to moderate over time.

This has not been the case, and in 1998 only 22 per cent of the Pretoria respondents feel positive -- indicating no real change. Thirty percent are uncertain and no fewer than 48 per cent feel negative about the future. The results for the non-metropolitan areas are even less positive.

#### 11.2.6 PERCEPTIONS OF STRATEGY

Around 30 per cent of all respondents who did not oppose a Volkstaat were completely uncertain about the strategy to achieve it. There may be a hidden agenda disguised by this response but most of the uncertainty was genuine. About 30 per cent to 33 per cent support the use of established political channels and negotiation.

Slightly more, or around 35 per cent of all Volkstaat sympathizers, were prepared to go further and suggest more active strategies like the establishment of co-operative ventures in core areas of the proposed territories and even forms of passive resistance. Only a very tiny minority, three percent, envisaged forceful confrontation, however. These were sentiments expressed in interviews which had aroused the imaginations of respondents, however, and it is doubtful whether the same levels of voluntary activity would be achieved in any real programme.

### **11.3 BROAD CONCLUSIONS**

Since 1995, the extent of support for the principle and practical possibility of a Volkstaat area or areas for Afrikaners has probably strengthened slightly. Among largely white Afrikaners in among the largest concentrations of white Afrikaans settlements in the country, nearly one third have no doubts or reservations in respect of their support for self-determination, and another third or slightly more support the principle and would support it in practice if their practical reservations and perceptions of its lack of economic or political viability could be addressed.

While there is considerable uncertainty about the kind of action to follow in pursuit of self-determination, there is quite substantial sentiment in favour of active voluntary mobilisation of a peaceful kind in pursuit of the idea. This level of commitment is unlikely to be realised in any concrete initiative, but it certainly reflects quite considerable intensity of support.

While the sentiments supporting the idea of self-determination for Afrikaners are largely a nostalgia for the status and conditions which whites enjoyed under political Apartheid, at least ten percent and perhaps up to around one third of Afrikaners in areas of Afrikaans concentration are motivated by a commitment to a sphere of autonomy for Afrikaans culture. This level of commitment would be somewhat lower among white Afrikaners on a nation-wide basis, but since all ethnic movements begin in a core of commitment and

activism, it does signal some prospect for the development of more general aspirations to cultural self-determination as time goes by.

Quite aside from the survey results reviewed above, however, the issue of territorial self-determination has become a battleground of factions within the Volkstaat movement itself. One faction is committed to an area in the Northern Cape as the core of a Volkstaat. This initiative is built around a small settlement on what is in fact a communal farm called Orania. Other factions, within the Volkstaat Council itself, propose areas to the East and North of Pretoria and parts of Pretoria itself. The Freedom Front, meanwhile, in an endeavour to make the concept more practical, has committed itself to other mechanisms for self-determination within the constitution, including sub-regions of provinces able to enjoy limited autonomy, and the idea of Cultural Councils with statutory powers. The initiative, therefore, is in quite considerable ferment at the moment and if anything, it is losing momentum. Given the levels and quality of commitment that the Volkstaat survey has revealed, however, it is unlikely to go away.

In other words, this survey seems to have demonstrated that the Volkstaat "*project*", in the broadest sense, is sufficiently endorsed to warrant serious consideration among circles of relevant policy-makers. While the most powerful underlying motivations for the aspiration to ethnic self-determination may not be intrinsically "*cultural*", it is impossible in any ethnic movement to disentangle material and cultural interests in the course of mobilisation. These strands of motivation are likely to converge and blend as time goes by.

Perhaps the only conditions under which the sentiments studied would wane, would be a period of spectacular economic progress and a rapid resolution of problems in security and the administration of a complex society. Such a rapid change in the political economy would be surprising, however, and it would be sensible to assume that the factors that have produced the results reviewed are likely to endure.



## **CHAPTER 12**

### **DISCUSSION OF THE EVIDENCE**

#### **THE RISE, DECLINE AND CURRENT CONDITION OF AFRIKANER ETHNICITY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO ETHNICITY THEORY**

In this chapter the evidence from the South African case study will be drawn together to highlight factors associated with the patterns over time up to the present. Most importantly, some key implications of the case study for theories of ethnicity will be explored. The report will end with a very brief consideration of the future of the Afrikaans ethnic movement.

##### **12.1 KEYNOTE FEATURES OF AFRIKANER ETHNIC MOBILISATION AS IT EMERGED IN HISTORY**

###### **A SIMULTANEOUS ACCRETION OF IDENTITY AND STRUCTURE OVER TIME**

The review in chapter 5 of the emergence of the Afrikaners shows that they are, relatively speaking, a young ethnic group, with the roots of the identity derived from diverse origins and phases of their history. The broad coherence of the group in its major components was only achieved within the last century. The evolution of identity has been extraordinarily complex, with elements which have imparted great strength and tenacity but at the same time brittleness and vulnerability as a consciousness and as a movement.

The original seed of identity was the association with the Dutch East India Trading Company, which attempted to impart a Dutch national character to the settlement and which provided the language root of what was later to become Afrikaans. The settlers, however, were in every sense a "*fragment*" of Europe, in the pattern described by Louis Hartz (1964). Their responses to conditions were largely defined by the dominant intellectual currents of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Europe. Not only by Europe, however, but by a self-consciously Protestant tradition at a time of great confessional tension.

The European conception of culture and civilisation was that of the formal "*high cultures*", incorporating codified legal systems, literature, art, formal institutions and formal statuses and ranks. This conception, as much as somatic differences, created a perception of a vast gulf of civilisation between the settlers and the indigenous people they encountered. A reasonably high level of endogamy was both the result and a further cause of the persistence of this racial differentiation which would probably have occurred even without the institution of slavery, which introduced a further differentiation of racial status.

Hence the group-consciousness which formed among the early Free Burghers had elements of firm definition and elements of great ambiguity. The firm definition of group boundaries was the racial European-indigenous division. The ambiguity may have derived from the fact that although the national status of the settlement was Dutch and the Company emphasised the Dutch identity, the settlers themselves were of mixed European origins, allowing conceptions of a Germanic and wider European consciousness.

Since the consciousness of identity was firmest around the division of race (as it was for most northern Europeans colonists in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries), race was fated to become the dominant marker of the group's social boundary.

These original cores of identity and the quality of consciousness associated with the identity were overlaid many times over by additional elements as sections of the settler group encountered new influences and challenges. Taken from the beginning of the settlement, these elements included the bureaucratic status differentiations imposed by the

Company between officials, employees, free settlers, slaves and indigenous people, the hardships and material privation of the migrant farmers, the perceived lack of sympathy of the later British colonial authorities, the tensions, communication difficulties and resource competition between the settlers and indigenous tribes on the open and unregulated frontier, and later warfare and tensions in the interior as the settlers trekked north. Thus the earliest manifestation of ethnicity was not exclusively or specifically Dutch or "*Afrikaans*", but was a probably a more generalised consciousness of local group position and status relative to hostile competing groups.

## IDENTIFICATIONS ACROSS THE ETHNIC BOUNDARY

At different times, and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the relations with the British had a significant influence. While the British in all periods tried to Anglicise, assimilate or defeat the emergent Afrikaans movement, the resulting hostility was not consistent and at significant periods the settlers and later the Afrikaners in the Republics and in the Union were divided on the issue of the English -- it is interesting to note that the exiled Dutch Prince of Orange supported the British occupation of the Cape, for example.

Some of the most notable Afrikaner leaders and elites sided with the British. At rank-and-file level many Afrikaners were for long periods undecided in their loyalties. Giliomee (draft manuscript in progress, 1999) records that the future National Party Prime Minister, in speaking to the Bondsraad (Council) of the Broederbond in 1942, lamented that the powerlessness of the Afrikaners was caused by internal divisions in all sectors of Afrikaner society; divisions which he attributed to the close interaction with the economic and cultural world of the English-speakers, leading to a duality in the consciousness of Afrikaners.

The interface with the Anglo-Saxon world, as indicated in the review of the Afrikaner's history, had to be dealt with in the political struggle against Smuts, Hofmeyr and the South African Party. When that struggle was won, the English ceased to be a problem in the sense

that they were a numerical minority, they tended to live in different towns and suburbs and, in any event, a large proportion of them were as race-conscious as the Afrikaners.

Studies by Lever (1978:113) and later by the Human Sciences Research Council (1985:80-83) showed that after the sixties, the "*social distance*" between English and Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans, as measured in the well known Social Distance Scale, had narrowed to rather insignificant levels. Lever's study in 1968 showed that the Afrikaner-to-Afrikaner social distance index was 1,2 and the Afrikaner-to-English-speaking white index was 1,3; in terms of social interaction they were virtually members of the same group. The Dutch, for the Afrikaners, had by then become ethnic semi-strangers, as understandably had the British, with indexes of 2,2 and 2,0 respectively. Needless to say the social distance indexes for Africans, coloureds and Indians were all well over 5.

The 1984 study of the HSRC suggested a very slight widening of the Afrikaans-English social distance gap from the Afrikaners' side in the late maturity of Apartheid, but if anything a greater closeness of English-speakers to Afrikaners -- racial solidarity at work.

## IDEOLOGICAL COORDINATION OF THE CORE ETHNIC DEFINITIONS

Linked with the previous point, the review shows that since the early settlement onwards there were disparate orientations among prominent Afrikaner opinion formers on the nature and flexibility of the ethnic boundary processes. The degree of exclusiveness and the openness to alternative value systems in the same polity were the critical issues. In the period after Verwoerd, when his successor, B.J. Vorster realised that more pragmatic policies had to be pursued in the interests of strategic positioning of the government and in order to augment its support base, the debate intensified and a division emerged in elite-thinking called the "*verkrampste-verligte*" (narrow versus enlightened) divide (see Giliomee, 1992, and Van Niekerk, 1985). This debate, which was fairly remote from the burgeoning Afrikaner business establishment, was muscular and it had as its audience not only the cultural leaders and ideologues within the ethnic networks but a much wider phalanx of South African and international observers. It had as participants both Afrikaners who were

loyal to the ethnic mission and rebels who attacked from a position of political opposition and hostility.

Although the Broederbond moved to the forefront of the debate among the "loyal" Afrikaners and attempted to integrate the new ideas into establishment thinking, the wider ramifications of the debate could not be "*co-ordinated*", and a circle of disaffection formed, strengthened by the attention it received from outside Afrikaner ethnic ranks. This was to prove destabilising for the ethnic movement, creating uncertainty and confusion.

### THE INCORPORATION OF CLASS ELEMENTS INTO ETHNICITY

The factor which intensified group consciousness more than any earlier element was the Anglo-Boer war and the dislocation and impoverishment of large numbers of Afrikaners after the Anglo-Boer war. In fact it was a phase of proletarianisation of the poorer former farmers. It was at this point that Afrikaners experienced the fear of sinking into the depths of poverty and simplicity of existence that typified the African proletariat. Had more Afrikaans workers perpetuated their association with the unions and absorbed labour ideologies, the subsequent history of the Afrikaans nationalist movement may well have been different.

As Johnston (1993) has argued, a major difference between the Northern Irish Protestant movement and that of Afrikaners was that the former was firmly structured around trade union solidarities and organisation and hence developed a sense of strategic autonomy. South Africa's divided labour market made a cross-racial and cross-cultural unification of the working class problematic. Significant sections of the Afrikaner workers corps were therefore only too glad to be "*rescued from communism*", as it was called, by alternative labour organisations which had the support of the Broederbond.

Hence the protest consciousness of the Afrikaner workers became incorporated into the burgeoning anti-British movement for self-determination. This, as Johnston points out, was to have significant implications for South Africa much later on, because the moral and

strategic ethnic leadership lost the element of uncompromising combativeness of typical labour organisation.

## CRITICAL BOUNDARY ISSUES DEFINE THE CONSCIOUSNESS -- RACE USURPS THE CORE CONTENT

The ethnic enterprise was intellectually driven by various strands of ideology in addition to the settler-based and anti-imperialist nationalism. These included varieties of Calvinist fundamentalism, German Romanticism and German race ideology, although the imported race ideologies were not in themselves very influential.

Nevertheless, the noted novelist and academic historian, J.M. Coetzee (1991) has described some of the leading ethnic brokers as "*obsessed*" by notions of race purity; an obsession which, through what Coetzee describes as social "*contagion*", produced a movement which was fixated ("*crazed*" in Coetzee's term) on the threat posed by the black majority for the Afrikaners' future.

The source of this fixation with race, which was ultimately to compromise and cripple the Afrikaans ethnic movement, has been described in many ways. Marxist authors have not devoted too much attention to it other than seeing it as a subsidiary or facilitating sentiment which could serve to promote the mobilising interests of the Afrikaans petit bourgeoisie in its campaign of capital accumulation. The race fixation was probably supported by the emergent capitalists -- Weber's principle of an "*affinity*" of interests referred to earlier would typify the process, but the nationalist movement was simply too large to have been conceptualised and directed, even inadvertently, by the commercial leadership. It was a movement driven by an idea and a system of moral precepts that required the intellectual muscle of theologians, academics, intellectuals and activists to drive it. It included petit-bourgeois class interests but could not conceivably have been moulded by such interests.

But why the almost pathological obsession with race? Welsh (1978) provides an insightful analysis arguing that race discrimination is frequently not a consequence of racism or race

prejudice, but typically arises in situations in which ethnocentrism, inter-group competition and differential power are involved. Broadly this was the case in the South African situation, but the intensity of the racial cleavage is such that a more textured explanation is called for.

Having had some personal insights into the thinking of some of the prominent "*high priests*" of race theory at the time, including the infamous Geoff Cronje and some of his associates -- the topic of Coetzee's analysis -- my view is that it arose dominantly from a very particular and self-conscious concern with the ethnic boundary among the highly religiously and socially conformist intelligentsia in the Northern provinces in the late thirties, forties and fifties. I would put together an explanation in the following way.

Those many Afrikaners who had emerged from the status of migrant farmers and impoverished semi-nomadic survivalists during the trek, and finally ended up as dislocated work-seekers, refugees from failed agriculture, were in fact an "*underclass*". They were constantly "*at risk*" of adopting the lifestyles of, and becoming absorbed into, the larger underclass society of coloured people and blacks. The middle class intelligentsia, as already indicated, were the heirs to a moral and social tradition informed by European "*high culture*". The elite Afrikaners in the North had furthermore developed an extreme status-consciousness because of the humiliation caused by the imperialist British treatment of Afrikaners.

The spirit of Afrikaner solidarity was already present and widespread. These ethnic entrepreneurs both identified with and needed the Afrikaner underclass for their cause, which was basically a status-competition with English-speaking elites and with those Afrikaners who identified with them. There was also an ideological conflict, informed from within the Afrikaans Calvinist traditions, between the economic individualism and liberal-conservatism of the British and English-speaking South African middle class, and the more socially-oriented communalism of the Afrikaner elites.

In addition, the Afrikaner ethnic entrepreneurs in the North were also, as a consequence of the geographic isolation of the Afrikaans Calvinist churches, rather austere and puritanical. In fact, theirs was a culture of psycho-sexual repression (which Coetzee also refers to within a Freudian framework). An ongoing issue of discussion between this author's mother and a good cross-section of the Afrikaner elite wives (whose children she taught music), for example, concerned things like whether or not a respectable housewife could afford to be seen in casual clothing watering a garden. With this mind-set, the task at hand was to uplift the "*fallen*" Afrikaner underclass; an ethnic and a religious obligation.

The "*saviours*" could take no risks, and the best way of doing it, was to focus specifically on the strengthening the "*lower boundary*" of the underclass, which was the racial interface. In Pretoria, parts of Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand, church-linked and municipal social workers were allocated to priority areas where there was a danger of race-admixture. As a junior student social worker as late as the early fifties, this author was allocated to a black-Indian-Afrikaner contact area in the north of Pretoria.

This Transvaal obsession later became encoded in Christian-national Education, and was carried back into the relatively more "*socially mature*" Cape, which had an older middle-class which had not become as isolated as the Transvaal ethnic elite. The lower boundary of the Afrikaner underclass, which was simultaneously the race boundary, occupied far more of the attention and energy of the emerging Afrikaner elite than notions of capitalist empowerment of the Afrikaner petit-bourgeoisie. It was in fact more the drive for full ethnic inclusion and less of a racial stereotypy which structured the racial obsession. This interpretation is a nuance, however, and in a broader sense it was in effect institutionalised racism.

As a consequence of these and other dynamics a formalised racial caste-system was powerfully entrenched, and was to outlive its relevance for Afrikaner boundaries but also come to be seen as a cost for the private sector and a de-legitimizing factor for the entire ethnic project, spawning divisions and heightened opposition.



## THE RELEVANCE OF THE CULTURAL DIVISION OF THE LABOUR MARKET

The literature in the chapters on theory relating to the influence of divided labour markets in segregating ethnic interests is compelling. Because of the fact that African workers undercut the Afrikaners in employment it is certainly another issue where the principle of an "*affinity*" of interests in establishing powerful structures was relevant. The ethnic ideologues in the thirties and forties were more than aware of the fact that some form of "*job reservation*" for whites would ultimately be necessary. One must accept that the competitive interests of white semi-skilled labour strengthened the race factor in the consciousness of rank-and-file Afrikaners.

It is difficult without going into very detailed evidence, to decide on the relative significance of labour market competition in the make-up of race consciousness in the movement. Any number of quotations or examples of events in the labour market for or against the proposition will not decide the issue. Perhaps one telling point, however, is that I could find no evidence that from the thirties and forties onwards, the race consciousness in the industrial towns and cities was any more severe than in non-industrial areas like Pretoria, Pietersburg, Bloemfontein and the like.

The divided labour market was a factor, but not an overwhelming factor in the mix of factors contributing to the institutionalised racism of the Afrikaner nationalist movement. It played an important part in the general determination to protect the lower boundary of the ethnic group -- it was therefore also incorporated into the wider ethnic dynamic.

## THE SURVIVAL OF RACE AS THE DOMINANT MARKER

In terms of ethnic "*markers*", then, the issue of the cultural tension between Anglo-Saxon and Afrikaans cultural worlds declined in salience after the Afrikaner nationalists achieved power. The religious marker, that of Afrikaner Calvinism, was unproblematic -- the Dutch Reformed Churches and Calvinist congregations as such had never been under serious pressure from the British. The political boundary was strengthened and extended with

confidence. These developments exposed race among the markers as the issue of greatest salience. As the tide of the other defining features ethnicity receded in salience, the issue of race was left high and almost dry, as it were.

The racially-defined ethnic boundary construction and defence fed back into the consciousness, and into the Afrikaner nationalist enterprise, and would have done so even without the relatively limited influence of the imported German race theories. This was fated to establish institutionalised racism and apartheid as the template of its ethnicity. It was, as suggested, a case of obsessional ethnic boundary maintenance usurping the content of the consciousness.

#### THE BUREAUCRATIZATION OF ETHNICITY

Political power after 1948 made the issue of the promotion of the Afrikaans language and culture less and less problematic; it became an issue of complacency, because the state administration took over the functions of ethnic cultural maintenance. The state, which grew more powerful in the post-war period of rapid economic growth, dealt with more and more issues on behalf of the Afrikaners. The relative, but narrowing, disadvantage of the Afrikaners in business was also an advantage in other respects because the most competent people became schoolteachers and public servants, and the Afrikaners received good service from the new dispensation. This was the institutionalisation and bureaucratization of ethnicity, and with it the growth of dependence on the National Party and its state machinery.

Race, however, maintained its salience because the emerging black liberation struggle prevented the resolution of that one aspect of the boundary system. Increasingly over time, it once again became an issue of survival, because the ethnicity had become incorporated into the state nationalism of the Republic, and the Republic was seen to be under racial and ideological attack.

The role of the state was to make the defence of boundaries too easy for the voluntary ethnic personnel in welfare and cultural organisations. Whereas in other ethnic groups, even in South Africa, boundary maintenance for whatever reason has to be maintained through the unofficial yet powerful sanctions and signals generated in the internal group dynamics, by the eighties Afrikaner professionals had the luxury of being able to distance themselves from the bureaucratic rules, which were very often crude and offensive.

In a very real sense the state had dislodged the ethnic formation. With apologies, another small example from personal experience is useful. This author, as a Probation Officer in 1960 in Pretoria, refused to implement official instructions in terms of the Child Welfare Act to remove an illegitimate baby of a Protestant unmarried mother from non-Protestant foster-care, and as a long drawn-out consequence was charged with contempt of the Children's Court. The entire Afrikaans professional establishment was sympathetic, but to no avail, and even the Magistrate fudged the issue and I left the Pretoria public service. In this and in many other ways, an ossifying state machinery was beginning to alienate its own professional and intellectual constituency. This was undermining the flexibility that any organisational system requires. Would the Afrikaner cultural leaders in the Cape have wanted to see the destruction of District Six, thereby alienating an Afrikaans-speaking coloured community substantially on the side of Afrikaners on the race issue?

#### STATE LEADERS AND THE LOST SCRIPT: THE COSTS OF INSTITUTIONAL DEPENDENCY IN THE TRANSITION

The most severe costs for the group were imposed by the bureaucratised state oligarchy on the leadership capacity of the ethnic group. After decades in power the government, quite aside from its ethnic representation, suffered all the defects of an unthreatened and dominant power position.

From the mid-eighties onward, it was placed under the severe, and thoroughly-deserved stress of having to deal with international pressure and sanctions, the externally and internally-organised campaigns of the liberation struggle and attempt to formulate policy

responses to complex problems arising out of the failure of Apartheid. On the policy level its responses were clumsy, and it failed to take timely initiatives to retain the high ground. The reputation of the party in academic and intellectual circles suffered disastrously. The security strategies in particular alienated many people who might otherwise have remained committed to the ethnic cause. This also meant that the government machine lost talent and capacity and became even more alienating -- a vicious cycle of bureaucratic decay.

The government was in effect experiencing, under extreme stress, all the dilemmas of state control and legitimacy in mobilised and politicised plural societies. The inevitable result was more and more Afrikaner intellectuals seeking other networks of identification.

When the costs of maintaining apartheid became too great and the government leaders began to implement a very necessary but poorly digested agenda of political change, the accelerating effect of precedents pulled them well beyond their capacity to manage the process. When the actual transition to democracy began, the role of the bureaucratic party was even more cataclysmic for the core interests of Afrikaner ethnic goals (as opposed to the goals of the Apartheid state establishment). In the end the government entered the negotiations without a clear concept of a resolution and without anticipating the disruptive effects on its agenda which negotiation crises, invented and otherwise, would have on its negotiating positions.

The shadowy "*deal*" between the political establishment and the liberation movements which was anticipated by most realistic observers, was understood as one of a broad type encountered in negotiated transitions to inclusive democracy described inter alia by O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead (1986). The concept was that of a founding "*pact*". Such pacts were generally understood by the authors referred to as being based on, and guaranteeing, the vital interests of the major parties to the agreement. Although the South African transition had the appearance of such a pact, it offered very much less in terms of guarantees of the vital cultural interests of Afrikaners than Professor Schmitter himself anticipated (personal communication on a visit to South Africa).

The negotiations themselves were the basis of the long-overdue political miracle of peaceful transition from authoritarian rule. A political miracle achieved, and mercifully so, however, on the basis of an uneasy blend of the good intentions of the government leadership, unremitting local and international pressure and woeful negotiating incompetence by the establishment politicians and bureaucrats. In this respect the conclusions of Alexander Johnston (1994) that the absence of a tough, protectionist trade-union tradition in the Afrikaner nationalist establishment are particularly apposite.

- The settlement was a Godsend in its destruction of Apartheid but a disaster for the conceptually and culturally distinct interests of Afrikaner ethnicity as a collective cause, revealing the full effect of Afrikanerdom's latter-day reliance on the state, the dominant party and its advisors.

On the side of the liberation struggle, the negotiators were drawn from the ranks of highly competitive and skilled current and former trade unionists and activists, with an abundance of progressive intellectuals and lawyers available to give support. On the side of government and the National Party, the participants were state ministers and politicians who had become accustomed to the delegation of tasks and the support of bureaucratic functionaries. The legal advisors on the side of government, because of the intensity of international pressure against apartheid and on South African academia, were apologetic and often anxious to be accepted as professionals by their opponents on the side of the liberation movements.

The National Party government went into the negotiations confident that it would emerge with a form of power-sharing in which they, the National Party and the ANC, as well as certain smaller parties, would be part of some form of semi-permanent ruling coalition. The confidence with which they held this concept obscured the detail which they required to be concerned about in the negotiations. To cut a long story short, the National Party and government negotiators were clumsy and naive in the negotiations compared with their antagonists. Some ministers actually commenced the beginning of their political defection in the process.

The negotiations produced an agreement for a five-year coalition "*Government of National Unity*", but one subject to numerically-based executive decision-making, which proved to be so tension-ridden and indeed humiliating for the National Party that it withdrew into opposition after two years. No single sphere of local autonomy or categorical entrenchment of cultural rights for Afrikaners was retained; not even at local government level. The party that went into the negotiations with a massive power advantage, fortuitously for the establishment of an open democracy based on constitutionally guaranteed individual rights, managed to snatch almost total defeat from the jaws of an equitable chance of an interesting multi-cultural constitution. In one restricted historical phase it accomplished more to undermine the Afrikaans language than the entire British colonial enterprise had been able to accomplish in successive periods over centuries.

This, as said, was the ultimate price paid by the Afrikaans ethnic enterprise for the reliance on politicians and bureaucrats who had grown fat and complacent with total power over decades. As the review in chapter 5 has suggested, the Afrikaners at large would never have even remotely accepted the outcome or even the transitional negotiations had they known what they were likely to produce. They might have accepted what Dan Horowitz (1982) has described as "*dual authority politics*", but they were handed the power base of a permanent minority instead.

## 12.2 THE CURRENT QUALITY OF AFRIKANER ETHNICITY

Empirical studies have shown that Afrikaner ethnicity at present has a pervasive quality of ambiguity. While all ethnicities undoubtedly have a blurred quality, history has bequeathed a particular complexity to Afrikaners.

### THE WIDER RACIAL OR EURO-CENTRIC IDENTITY

The factor-analyses and the other survey-based evidence have shown a dominant preoccupation with deteriorating group status that is simultaneously a racial status. This is closely linked with material protest and a perception of governance in the country which deviates widely from the (very much idealised) memory of efficiency and orderliness under the former white government. The material protest is not based on fiction: the very large 1999 annual "AMPS" survey (All Media Products survey carried out for the advertising industry) shows that white unemployment has doubled since 1995. This consciousness is based on relativities more than on absolute deprivation because Afrikaners are still a privileged minority. The material protest is shared with English-speaking whites. Hence the threats perceived in the new situation are not specifically ethnic. Threats to Afrikaans language and culture rank very low in the priority-order of status threats. X X

In terms of group identification, the primary political identification of most Afrikaners is with other whites. This is based on an openly euro-centric conception, or misconception, that "Western" standards and orderliness are at odds with a more compliant, relaxed and less principled "African" system of governance, although many conservative whites and Afrikaners perceive some affinity with the type of African conservative traditionalism portrayed by the traditional Zulu leadership, for example. One appreciates that many readers will not expect too fine a point being put on this white orientation and would see it simply as persisting Afrikaner racism, which it is in effect. At the same time, however, because it is imbued with conceptions of European culture and styles of governance, it signals a wider zone of ethnic identification among Afrikaners -- "dual consciousness".

The empirical results, taken together, show that Afrikaners have a somewhat greater commitment to this conception of Western or Euro-centric identity than English-speakers. This is no doubt partly due to a greater sense of threat to their occupational interests in the new situation, but I would submit that it is also due to the fact that an aspect of Calvinist doctrine emphasises a worldly expression of faith in orderly and accountable public life.

We may recall that the results of Hanf et al (1981:91) showed Afrikaners to be about three to four times more religiously and ethnically conscious than English-speakers.

Gibson and Gouws (1998) have established empirically that the whites, mainly Afrikaners, with a stronger level of group identification, racial or ethnic, and those with more intense psychic needs for identification, are most likely to express antipathy to racial and ethnic outgroups -- a familiar finding in social science. This type of finding may be tautologous, however, saying in effect that ethnics have stronger ethnic boundaries than non-ethnics. It also glosses over the perceptual dynamics involved.

### *THE AFRIKANER CULTURAL AND ETHNIC "INNER-CONSCIOUSNESS"*

While less than one in ten Afrikaners give priority to threats to language and cultural interests over material concerns and concerns with governance, the proportion which identifies primarily with the Afrikaans ethnic group is higher. The empirical evidence shows it at around 20 to 30 per cent. In other words, a core of the more particular ethnicity is consistently present in the consciousness of Afrikaners.

Furthermore, the level of priority given to threats to language and culture tend to be increasing over time, up to the most recent investigations. More recent, as yet uncomputerised data seem to show a further intensification of language and cultural grievances.

While not at the level of first priority, a sense of language and cultural discrimination is a matter of near-consensus among Afrikaners. In this sense, among rank-and-file Afrikaners as opposed to intellectuals, there is very little conscious defection from an association with the ethnic group. The defection which has taken place is from organised ethnic politics. Politics is dominated by wider status, identity and material concerns, whereas cultural identity is preserving itself in the private or social spheres. There is a "retreat" but it is a retreat from politically mobilised ethnicity as opposed to identity.



An extensive series of factor analyses on attitudinal data showed that within the wider crystallisation of a racial and Euro-centric group consciousness, which tends to coincide with a cultural consciousness among Afrikaners, there is a separately identifiable commitment to specifically Afrikaner ethnicity, and similar but less manifestly experienced tendencies among other minorities in South Africa.

This "*inner identity*" could conceivably be merely a superimposition on the wider racial and Euro-centric consciousness, but the factor analyses showed very consistently that it is a separate perceptual dynamic. It obviously has large areas of commonality with the wider identification but it crystallises separately and therefore has a degree of autonomous attitudinal status.

This ethnic, as opposed to racial, identity is not unique to Afrikaners, and all groups within the South African racial minorities reveal, equally consistently, a more particularistic as opposed to racial identification. It is in all groups a minority phenomenon but the minority strength of the tendency is not insignificant.

This "*ethnic*" identity among Afrikaners is not consistently associated with any greater militancy than the wider identity, and indeed there is no greater militancy among Afrikaners in general than there appears to be among other racial and language-based minorities. Associations with militancy are stronger among the coloured language minority, where the identity is overlaid, with a strong consciousness of material deprivation. Nonetheless, there is a core, albeit small, of ethnic militancy among Afrikaners.

The empirical research also confirmed much earlier findings by Schlemmer (and Turner) (1973) that the ethnic-orientation among Afrikaners includes a sub-group which we termed "*separatist verligtes*" (enlightened separatists) -- a fairly distinct tendency in which ethnicity is not associated with racial outgroup-hostility. If anything this orientation has strengthened. The evidence is strong, therefore, that Afrikaner ethnicity and racial-Euro-centric in-group identification are conceptually and ideologically separate phenomena.

They overlapped and consistently reinforced each other in the period of Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation, but they are distinguishable phenomena in their composition.

In this regard one should note as well, that research by Lever (1978:126) suggested little association between Afrikaans ethnocentrism and the authoritarian personality syndrome which has been associated with racism in a number of studies outside South Africa.

The "*inner identities*" among the coloured and English-speaking white racial minorities are not as self-consciously held as is the case among the Afrikaners. The identities have not become encoded or mythologised; they are what one may describe as nascent ethnicities in the form of group-consciousness. The finding that some form of ethnic group identification is present among English-speakers has been established before, not only by this author but also by Sennet and Vorster (1996). Among the English-speaking white "*semi-ethnics*", as it were, there is an a sense of affinity with Afrikaans ethnicity but among coloured "*semi-ethnics*" the relationship to white Afrikaners tends to be hostile, as one would expect in the light of Apartheid.

The empirical evidence also reflected a marked educational differentiation between the tendencies identified for Afrikaners. The majority of Afrikaners with university education tend to have weaker group identification at all levels of identity outlined above, but there is a core among the Afrikaans intelligentsia that remains ethnic in its commitments. The heated and hostile debate which rages currently between "*cosmopolitan*" and ethnic Afrikaners is well-reflected in the empirical data.

#### *POLITICAL OR TERRITORIAL SELF-DETERMINATION: A LIMP CONSENSUS*

Afrikaners reveal a high level of support in principle for self-determination and/or a Volkstaat, but an active commitment to the ideal is a minority phenomenon. The urge to self-determination is not only related to ethnic commitment but also to the racial-Eurocentric identification. This is also reflected in the significant support for an Afrikaner Volkstaat among English-speakers.

The level of active commitment to the ideal of a Volkstaat is mainly depressed by perceptions of its economic and political non-viability. As such it is limp and passive, but if a perception of its practical possibility took hold, the ideal is likely to burgeon.

#### *ONION VERSUS ARTICHOKE: LAYERS OF AFRIKANER IDENTITY*

What the data tends to show is well expressed by Stanley Hoffmann (1968:200-201). Ethnic identity is not like an onion with which, if one peels away layers of outer identity, the vegetable vanishes; it is rather like an artichoke, where peeling away layers of petals eventually reveals the core or heart of the flower.

The specifically Afrikaans high-priority ethnic commitment is a minority phenomenon, albeit significant. The descriptive cultural self-definition of themselves by Afrikaners, is a majority phenomenon, but does not have direct salience as regards political commitments. Religious self-identification and commitment is also a majority phenomenon, no longer with direct salience for politics.

The identification with a wider racial-Euro-centric value system, however, is a majority phenomenon with direct salience for conservative political commitments. The political salience, however, appears to be intensified where cultural and religious self-definitions are present. The effect of the apparently non-politically focused cultural self-identification, therefore, is subliminal, but powerful.

The high-priority ethnic commitment, therefore, appears to be at the core of what may be termed an ethnically-linked but not necessarily self-conscious political culture. This political formation is dominantly conservative, but it embraces an idealistic and reform-oriented minority. The political salience of both the core-ethnicity and the wider ethnically-linked elements of political culture are tending to intensify, but gradually.

The broad categorisation given above tends to be supported by empirical survey research by Bornman (1994a) and by Kotze (1997), although they did not attempt the identification of layers of identity as offered above. Another study by Bornman (1994b) has shown that ethnic identification among Afrikaners is associated with positive self-image and confidence. Although this to some extent lowers the dependence on ethnic identification, one of the problems of the Afrikaners over the decades was how to deal with extremely self-assured Anglo-Saxon competitors. The Afrikaans author Nepgen (1938) remarked on this problem long ago and argued that the ethnic identification and the sense of having a collective mission increased the sense of personal worth of Afrikaners. Here we see an illustration of one of the primary factors in ethnic identification at work.

### 12.3 SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR ETHNICITY THEORY

One way of relating Afrikaner ethnicity to a wider theoretical field is to ask how the major features of Afrikaner ethnicity outlined above would translate into general propositions. Some of these propositions can be fairly firm, while other issues have to be stated as possibilities, because the Afrikaner case study does not always produce a clear conclusion. The following propositions and possibilities are suggested by the conclusions for Afrikaners reached in the previous section; also by the wider evidence and the historical review of the emergence of Afrikaner ethnicity. The propositions are not assumed to be new or original, but they may have some confirmatory value. They broadly coincide with and tend to confirm the relevant propositions included in chapter 4.

#### *THE ETHNIC CORE SUI GENERIS*

Despite several overlays of group-linked interests, interactions with other groups at the boundaries and adaptations in value systems, what has been termed an ethno-cultural inner-consciousness within the particular ethnic group, can or will persist. This core-consciousness is relatively independent of extraneous instrumental motives, and denotes an intrinsic identification.

The core ethnic commitment is not necessarily a majority phenomenon. But even where it exists in a minority within the group, it is a "core" in the sense that the common self-identification of most members in terms of culture and ethnic label links them to the core commitment in a pattern of common sentiment.

#### *THE ETHNIC CORE AND MYTHS OF ORIGIN*

The ethnic core-commitments, where they are self-conscious, are likely to be linked to the myths of group origin, since these myths are the symbolic metaphors which impart the sense of belonging which is a defining feature of ethnic phenomena. The myths of origin need not be highly specific. By this is meant that they need not relate to a single ancestor or kin formation. The perception of the emergence of a group over a period of distant history, with diverse symbolic events, may be sufficient.

#### *THE SPECIFIC IDENTITY REFERENCE IN THE MYTH OF ORIGIN MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE A BEARING ON THE RELATIVE EXCLUSIVITY OF THE GROUP AT A LATER STAGE.*

The history of the Afrikaners raises the question of whether or not a broad European-Protestant self-definition at an early stage, or the ambivalence with regard to the English, may have influenced the rules of ethnic inclusion or exclusion at a later stage. The question of whether a very specific myth (eg. Moses/the Tribe of Israel) versus a more diffuse reference (Germanic-French Protestant settlers associated with a Dutch Company) makes a difference to the degree of ethnic exclusivity at a later stage, requires comparative investigation. (In the case of Afrikaners there is even today a semblance of Germanic or Huguenot pride, but its subtle effects have not been investigated.)

#### *IT APPEARS TO BE POSSIBLE FOR ETHNIC RESPONSES, EVEN MILITANT RESPONSES, TO EMERGE EVEN WHERE THE ETHNIC IDENTITY IS LATENT.*

If elements of "*contrastiveness*" are present and a competitive situation with sufficient stress to generate needs for psychic support exists, an ethnic response quite as powerful as is would occur in a self-conscious ethnic group is possible. This illustrates the "*need disposition*" aspect of ethnicity which underlies its "*availability*" as a factor in group or political mobilisation and conflict.

This proposition is drawn from the evidence of inter-group conflict among black workers on the mines which occurred with a strong ethnic coloration despite the fact that the participants were idealistically opposed to the notion of ethnic solidarity and group formation. It is also drawn from the evidence of a "*group consciousness*" with elements of activism among coloured people in the factor analyses, although the actors themselves would probably not experience anything like an ethnic consciousness and indeed would feel uneasy if they did.

*ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS IS NOT UNIFORM ACROSS A GROUP* (as implied by the distinction above between a core consciousness and marginal consciousness) *BUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE CORE AND THE MARGINS MOBILISE AGAINST EACH OTHER IS RELEVANT TO THE VIABILITY AND SURVIVAL OF AN ETHNIC GROUP.*

The question here is whether the outer rings in the "*artichoke*" of ethnic identity allow the "*heart*" to speak on their behalf is obviously critical to the coherence or vulnerability of a cultural group.

*THE POSSIBILITY OF TENSION BETWEEN CORE VERSUS MARGIN, OR BETWEEN "EXCLUSIVES" VERSUS "INCLUSIVES" RAISES THE QUESTION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP, ORGANISATIONAL CO-ORDINATION AND RECONCILIATION WITHIN THE GROUP, WHICH HAS A BEARING ON THE VULNERABILITY OF THE GROUP.*

The Afrikaners, for example, at different periods have spent perhaps a century or more fighting each other about the relationships with the English-speakers and more latterly with

coloured Afrikaans-speakers. This proposition has been made very effectively by Milton Esman (1990:55)

*"Equally important (to an ethnic group) are the abilities, commitment, and coherence of the political entrepreneurs who organise and guide ...(and) provide ongoing links with the mass of their ethnic community."*

*ETHNIC BOUNDARIES (as Frederik Barth postulated) RELATE MORE TO THE INTERESTS AND INSTRUMENTAL INTERACTIONS OF AN ETHNIC GROUP THAN TO ITS CORE CONTENT AND COMMITMENTS. AND AS SUCH, SINCE THE BOUNDARIES AFFECT THE CORE CONTENT OVER TIME, THE BOUNDARY CAN USURP THE ORIGINAL COMMITMENTS.*

This seems to follow convincingly from the Afrikaners instrumental concerns with race and the race boundary.

*AN ORGANISED ETHNIC GROUP WILL INCORPORATE CLASS INTERESTS AND OTHER COMPETITIVE INTERESTS RELATIVE TO OTHER GROUPS. IT IS POSSIBLE FOR AN ETHNIC GROUP TO INCORPORATE OPPOSING CLASS INTERESTS SIMULTANEOUSLY, AND TO RECONCILE THEM WITHIN THE GROUP. OR TO GIVE ONE SET OF INTERESTS PRECEDENCE OVER ANOTHER. CLASS INTEREST CAN BECOME THE DOMINANT INTEREST BASE OF A GROUP OR IT MAY BE LESS SALIENT RELATIVE TO OTHER GROUP INTERESTS.*

This proposition is in contrast to the proposition in Marxist literature, which would have it that the class dynamic will usurp, incorporate or even manufacture or facilitate ethnic interests to support the structural imperative of the mode of production. The fact that the Afrikaner ethnic group could simultaneously incorporate and integrate proletarian, petit bourgeois and (semi-socialist) bureaucratic interests at the time of its greatest cohesion indicates, however, that the ethnic formation can be the prior or co-ordinating factor.

*WHERE CLASS INTERESTS ARE INCORPORATED, UNLESS AN ENTIRE CLASS IS INVOLVED, THE PHENOMENON OF "SPLIT LABOUR MARKETS" WILL EMERGE AND THE CLASS SEGMENT WITHIN THE ETHNIC GROUP WILL COMPETE WITH CLASS-EQUIVALENTS OUTSIDE THE GROUP. THE SAME PRINCIPLE WOULD APPLY IN RESPECT OF CAPITAL MARKETS AND BUREAUCRATIC OPPORTUNITY.*

Here again the ethnic dynamic appears to have precedence over the class dynamic. In the case of Afrikaners the impoverished proletariat did not co-opt the ethnic group but returned to the ethnic group of the identification they had before their proletarianisation. The split labour market literature seems to place undue emphasis on the worker competition; the competition between ethnic adversaries will occur at all levels of opportunity, and as such reflect the instrumentality of ethnicity as such and not the incorporation of ethnicity for extraneous instrumental purposes.

*IT FOLLOWS THAT THE ETHNIC FRAMEWORK CAN LEND THRUST AND COHERENCE TO CLASS INTERESTS WITHIN ITS FORMATION. AT THE SAME TIME INCORPORATION OF CLASS-BASED ORGANISATION AS A COMPONENT OF ETHNIC MOBILISATION CAN LEND STRENGTH AND TENACITY TO AN ETHNIC GROUP.*

The references in the preceding text to the comparative work on South Africa and Northern Ireland by Alexander Johnston are apposite in this regard, but the development of Afrikaner capitalist organisations were particularly important to the competitive viability of Afrikaner ethnicity, AND VICE-VERSA.

It may be assumed to follow that both class and ethnic dynamics are capable of incorporating each other under the required conditions, but it is suggested that this equivalence is rare. The ethnic formation normally requires so wide a diversity of functions and roles that the occupational structure implied would cut across a typical class structure. It is suggested, therefore, that:



*WHILE AN ETHNIC FORMATION CAN INCORPORATE CLASS DYNAMICS AND INTERESTS WITHIN IT, CLASS-BASED FORMATIONS, BECAUSE THEY IMPLY CONFLICT BETWEEN WORKER AND BOURGEOIS PERSONNEL, CANNOT NORMALLY INCORPORATE THE ETHNIC DYNAMIC.*

*THE GENERAL COMPETITIVE MOTIVATION WITHIN ETHNIC GROUPS IS THAT OF GROUP STATUS OR POSITION VIS A VIS OTHER GROUPS -- THE GENERAL REWARDS BEING SELF-ESTEEM THAT ALL MEMBERS CAN SHARE. THIS GROUP STATUS TRANSLATES INTO PSYCHIC REWARDS AND SELF-CONFIDENCE.*

This factor has among Afrikaners contributed to the competitive success of individual members after periods of dislocation and defeat.

*IT IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, FOR STRONGLY-DEVELOPED INTERESTS IN A COMPETITIVE SITUATION TO SO COLOUR AND STRUCTURE THE DEFINITIONS OF GROUP STATUS THAT SUCH INTERESTS BEGIN TO USURP THE ORGANISATION AND GOAL SETTING WITHIN THE GROUP. THIS DANGER IS GREATEST WHEN THE INTERESTS INVOLVED ARE THE POWER-INTERESTS OF INFLUENTIAL ELITES, BECAUSE THE STRATEGIC MISTAKES THEY MAKE IN PURSUIT OF THEIR POWER INTERESTS MAY DAMAGE THE COHERENCE AND VITALITY OF THE GROUP. THIS DANGER IS LESSENERD IF THE ELITES IN THE GROUP ARE DRAWN FROM A DIVERSE INTEREST-BASE IN THE ETHNIC GROUP ITSELF.*

In the case of Afrikaners the political elites became too powerful and the entire project was placed at risk by its dependence on a political party, which linked the integration of group status to particularly power-oriented policies which were doomed to fail.

*A RELAXED BOUNDARY BETWEEN TWO GROUPS CAN GIVE RISE TO A DUAL IDENTITY, OR AN OVERARCHING IDENTITY, WHICH CAN BECOME THE MORE SALIENT IDENTITY IN THE POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC FIELDS. THE GROUP WILL*

*CONTINUE TO EXIST WITH AN ETHNIC "CORE" BUT THE MARGINAL MEMBERSHIP MAY LOSE THE FEATURES OF MOBILISED ETHNICITY AND BECOME A GROUP WHICH IS MERELY LINGUISTICALLY OR CULTURALLY DISTINCTIVE.*

This is the proposition arising out of the relationship between Afrikaans and English-speaking South Africans after socio-economic progress among Afrikaners and the attainment of political dominance reduced the competition between the two groups. It is necessary to note, however, that:

*EVEN WHERE A BOUNDARY HAS LOST ITS INSTRUMENTALITY OR SALIENCE FOR THE PROMOTION OF GROUP STATUS, AND DUAL IDENTITY AND POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC COALITIONS EMERGE, A CORE WITHIN THE GROUP IS LIKELY TO RETAIN AN ETHNO-CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS, AT TIMES UNCONNECTED WITH INTER-GROUP COMPETITIVENESS (see above proposition on the inner consciousness).*

*UNDER THESE CONDITIONS AN ETHNIC GROUP MAY LOSE CONSIDERABLE COHERENCE AND THE SCOPE OF ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION WILL SHRINK BACK TO THE CORE.*

*THE RELATIVE SIZE OF THE CORE COMMITMENT, OR ALTERNATIVELY STATED, THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT BECOMES ERODED WILL DEPEND ON MODES OF EXPRESSION OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE GROUP CULTURE AND THE ALTERNATIVE IDENTITY SUPPORT AVAILABLE WITHIN THE CULTURE. LIKE RELIGIOSITY OR INDIVIDUALISM.*

*THE INTERACTION BETWEEN GROUPS THAT HAVE NO SALIENT COMPETITIVE RELATIONSHIPS IS AN INSTANCE OF "UNRANKED" ETHNICITY AND THE SHRINKING OF THE CORE OF ETHNIC COMMITMENT (as opposed to nominal recognition of cultural or language differences) CAN GIVE RISE TO WIDER PROCESSES OF GROUP DECOMPOSITION.*

The process would accord with an observation made by Donald Horowitz (1985:29 *passim*: see theoretical section) that the ethnic "*cement*" is weaker in unranked groups than it is in ranked groups. Horowitz also makes the point that there is uncertainty in unranked groups (see ahead). His point is taken, however, that because the odds are so stark in situations of ranked ethnicity, and the possible conflicts so severe, that unranked groups may be more stable over time, albeit at a lower level of intensity. The non-mobilised and unranked "*ethnicity*" of cultural differences and residues can be very stable and persistent over time. There are other dangers, however.

*IN "UNRANKED" GROUPS OR IN SITUATIONS IN WHICH POLITICAL COMPETITION BETWEEN TWO GROUPS IS OF LOW SALIENCE, THE ORGANISING AND CO-ORDINATING ELEMENTS WILL WEAKEN OR BE TAKEN OVER BY INTELLECTUALS OR ETHNIC EXTREMISTS, AND IN BOTH CASES THE ETHNIC GROUP WILL LOSE COHERENCE OUTSIDE THE ETHNIC CORE.*

In the case of intellectuals in modern industrial society, their "*ethnic*" values will be vulnerable to the pervasive universally-oriented humanist or cosmopolitan spirit in upper-middle class Western culture. In the case of ethnic extremists their lack of sympathy with the more pragmatic rank-and-file members will reduce their capacity to co-ordinate and reconcile conflicting tendencies within the group. The cement in the core will have to be exceptionally strong for the group to maintain a significant coherence, as with, say, the Jewish group in South Africa where the collective memories not only of the holocaust but also of descent from ghetto communities in Eastern Europe are still fairly strong.

*WHERE THE ETHNIC BOUNDARY DEMARCATES "RANKED" GROUPS, IT WILL OBVIOUSLY BE MORE FIRMLY DEFINED AND DEFENDED THAN IN CASES WHERE GROUPS ARE UNRANKED.*

This observation is simple common-sense; these boundaries are more often than not accompanied by conflicts of interests, political competition or invidious status distinctions

and it follows that "*social closure*" of various kinds will result. This does not mean to say that boundaries between unranked groups become irrelevant, but as with non-exclusive Afrikaners and English-speaking whites in South Africa, there are hardly any sanctions relating to intermarriage, for example.

*WHERE INTERACTION BETWEEN RANKED GROUPS THREATENS CORE FEATURES IN THE SELF-DEFINITION OF THE ADVANTAGED GROUP. AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THEM IS THREATENED BY SOCIAL CONDITIONS OR OTHER FACTORS INCONSISTENT WITH THE RANKING. THEN VERY INTENSIVE BOUNDARY MAINTENANCE BEHAVIOUR AND SUPPORTING RATIONALISATIONS WILL EMERGE.*

In the previous section this process was put forward as an explanation of the genesis of the racism of Afrikaner nationalists. They were fighting for their conception of Afrikaners as heirs to the "*civilisation*" perceived to be associated with the European high cultures, which was under threat because of the socio-economic crisis of the Afrikaner poor. This is a case where the processes of boundary maintenance have effects which among many, if not most Afrikaners usurped the original basis of their ethnic consciousness and superimposed a systematic racism in its stead. Although one does not want to put niceties on racism, an understanding of a process such as the one outlined may help to identify means to combat the virulence of racism in some, if not all situations.

*FINALLY, WHERE POLITICAL OR OTHER VICTORIES AWARD AN ETHNIC GROUP CONTROL OF A TERRITORY AND ITS STATE MACHINERY, THE ETHNICITY, IN BECOMING A NATIONALISM, IS INTRODUCED TO A NEW RANGE OF THREATS AND COMPLEXITIES.*

Even ethnically-based governments in plural societies cannot ignore the competitive pressures emanating from competing civic groups and ethnic goals have to give way to strategic power goals and coalitions of interest. Such coalitions may reduce the salience of ethnic boundaries for the political elites. Furthermore, the strategic and practical

requirements of government, even in ethnically dominated states, may alienate the ethnic rulers from at least some of the ethnic followers. If the government's attempt to pursue ethnic goals at the cost of risking conflict or deeper conflict, moral contradictions will arise which will weaken collective ethnic resolve.

These and a host of other factors in governance typically appear to cause schisms and splits between tendencies within ethnic ruling groups, and in addition to the examples of political schism and splits among Afrikaners, one may think of hosts of other examples, from Israel, the Basque federal province, Northern Ireland and many others to Belgium. When ethnic groups divide between political parties, the nature of inter-party competition makes the more responsive methods of reconciling tendencies within an ethnic group more difficult to achieve.

Aside from which the bureaucratic imposition of institutionalised protection for ethnic interests by a government undermines the voluntarism and key elements of commitment which are central to the nature of ethnicity. The greatest risks to ethnic group coherence will arise when a group claims formal political power over others.

## 12.4 TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK

Each one of the propositions in 12.3 coincides broadly with propositions reviewed in the literature. It would be tedious to return to chapters 2 and 3 to pick up the references, but a few stand out. Mention has already been made of the fact that the conclusions of Donald Horowitz (1985) on the differences between ranked and unranked systems long preceded this text, as would his conclusions on dual and over-arching identities, and the moral contradictions which weaken ethnicities in situations of ethnic domination (Horowitz, chapter 1). Horowitz elsewhere (1975:134) observes in the context of Nigeria that

*"With a multiplication of contexts, there was typically a multiplication of levels and some of the lower levels of identity often remained quite powerful":*

in confirmation of the propositions made above about levels of identity and the persistence of the inner identity of Afrikaners at a core.

Similarly the propositions about the ethnic boundaries as mechanisms of competition are broadly in line with much of the analysis of Frederik Barth (1969), although this analysis gives more prominence to the fact that boundaries cannot be drawn around something that has no prior reality of ethnic consciousness. His propositions, however, accommodate the fact that the racial boundary obsession of Afrikaners usurped much of the original "*content*" of the ethnic commitment.

The persistence of core ethnic commitments on the basis of intrinsic attachments to a real or mythical origin has similarly been emphasised by authors too numerous to mention. The exposition of the utility of ethnic attachments to the individual psyche by Horowitz (1985:143-147, 182-184) and their capacity to stimulate reactions out of proportion to the threat involved (Horowitz, page 130-131) is consonant with the potential for violent responses to outgroups, even where ethnic identity has not crystallised as a self-conscious phenomenon. A pre-ethnic "*need*" for group identification under certain conditions is accommodated in the propositions above.

The propositions above take issue with some Marxists for assuming that class contradictions and interests operate with some "*hidden hand*" of structural influence, beyond human agency, to create supportive cultural and other "*superstructural*" manifestations, including ethnicity. But this analysis makes provision for class, through affinities of interest, strengthening ethnic structure. Indeed material interests and class contradictions are almost always present in inter-ethnic competition. The notion that ethnic formations can incorporate class as elements in their structure of interests is also a familiar theme in the literature reviewed in chapter 2.

The fact that there is not any new or totally contrary proposition in the range above does not unduly concern this author because social science progresses in an endless process of confirmation and refutation. But the propositions were presented in a continuous listing for a particular reason: this being to demonstrate that, in order for them to encompass the

empirical features of the particular case study, they could usefully be integrated in an explanatory framework.

The proposal of an integrated explanatory framework is not new either, but if one can be identified which covers the varied patterns of cause and effect in the South African case study it might just be useful in other contexts. What are the requirements of such a framework?

Eric Leifer, after making the point that:

*"The distinctions between class and ethnic interests has allowed a sharper division between proponents of the two models than was theoretically or empirically justifiable",*

argues for the need to embed the rational pursuit of advantage within a sociological model; a model which can be provided by identifying the elements of ethnic mobilisation. He emphasises the need for a focus on mobilisation of identity rather than identity as a condition which is complete in itself:

*"Throw away the distinction between class and ethnic interests and the data begin speaking only one language. This is not the language of economic motives or of passionate ethnic appeals but the language of political mobilisation. The aim of a model of political mobilisation is to predict the degree of mobilization which will occur in concrete settings."* (Leifer, 1981:46)

In order to be embedded in what Leifer refers to as a "*sociological*" approach, a model has to incorporate and transcend the major competing explanations of ethnic action. It has to transcend both the essentialism of reliance on anything approaching primordial sentiments as a sufficient condition for mobilisation, and those instrumentalist or radical constructivist arguments to the effect that interests and rational calculations unleash hidden processes within social structure which relegate human sentiments and needs to a secondary or accompanying role.

Something along the lines of an integrated framework is offered by Juteau (1996), a model which she terms "*ethnic communalization*". She departs from the assumption that ethnic boundaries are not created "*ex nihilo*; they are created from '*real*' social locations and

*involve 'real' histories"* (p61). Her model, with some colouring in of aspects which appear to be implicit in her arguments, would involve an integration of two boundary processes. The one is the "*external boundary*" which involves the changing definitions of insiders and outsiders under the impact of the transactions and competitions of interest with other groups and forces at the boundary of the ethnic group. The "*internal boundary*", on the other hand, involves the socialisation and mobilisation processes which are necessary to engender or reinforce a subjective belief in a community of origin and to establish the markers and criteria which the actors must use in social and political interaction. Yelvington (1991:165) also supports the postulate of a dual boundary process in ethnicity, as have Horowitz and others.

The "*internal boundary*" processes of Juteau can be seen in two ways. They can be seen as the consolidation and reinforcement of identities and historical memories which already exist as cultural features. They are sometimes depicted, often by authors wishing to establish the primacy of class and power interests, as the manipulations or creations of identity and meaning by powerful establishments. A South African example would be that of Hofmeyr (1987) who gives an account of "*being made into an Afrikaner*" by an "*unstable and contradictory process*" of the manufacture of an Afrikaans identity and literary culture in the early twentieth century. If such authors make the slightest acknowledgement that the manufacturing of identity is unlikely to succeed or be so common unless there is a prior "*seed*" of a sense of origin and the psychic rewards associated with a sense of difference, then the "*internal boundary*" process of Juteau can accommodate both the "*idealists*" and the Marxists. As Crawford Young explains:

*"Primordialism usefully completes instrumentalism by explaining the force (I would add 'availability') of the 'affective tie' through which interest is instrumentally pursued."* (Young, 1993:23)

The notion of the processes internal to the group being a form of boundary is useful because unless those processes are effective the internal identity formation will not support from below the external boundary which gives the ethnicity its cohesion in the pursuit of group status and rewards.



But the notion of the mobilisation or organisation of the internal processes and criteria is too mechanical on its own, and would in practice be too forced to be effective. There must be another or additional link between the factors associated with the external boundary and the internal responses for the model to be what Leifer above calls "*sociological*".

Carter Bentley has put forward propositions which would bridge the external and the internal dimensions of ethnicity. He calls it "*habitus*" (Bentley, 1987; Bentley, 1991). Bentley commences with the observation that ethnic boundaries and definitions do not necessarily co-vary in any regular fashion. He has to explain why ethnic identification can arise, or not arise, independently of the actual origin or cultural features of a group. He uses the concept of "*habitus*", following Pierre Bourdieu, to explain the process he postulates. Habitus is described as the experience by a group of circumstances and conditions, including economic and social factors as well as language differences, etc.-- the group's "*habitual practice*".

This habitus or habitual practice produces: "*consciousness of affinities of interest and experience that embodies subliminal awareness of objective commonalities in practice*" (Bentley, 1987:27). In a later reply to a critique, Bentley makes the description simpler when he says that shared economic, social and cultural conditions "*engender feelings of identification among people similarly endowed*" (1991:173). Furthermore, Bentley argues that habitual practice engenders "*common memories which become unconscious*" (p173) and that it represents "*deep structure ... drawing together an infinite variety of surface expressions as being of a single type*" (p170-171). Bentley rejects the assertion in a critique by Yelvington (1991) that he makes light of the sentiments and feelings of identity, but he tries to relate them more to the shared conditions of the group than to the myths and circumstances of origin.

The inputs of the authors referred to just above provide useful guidelines to a framework. The task now is to draw them together, and to relate them to both the conclusions emerging out of chapters 2 and 3 and to the propositions arising out of the South African case made under 12.3 above.

An integrated model along the following lines is suggested. The ordering of points is simply for convenience and does not necessarily imply priorities or sequences in the process:

- ETHNICITY IS MOBILISATION

First, the emphasis has to be on ethnic mobilisation, because inert ethnicity would be merely an interesting form of cultural differentiation or celebration of self by a lifestyle category.

- IDENTITY IS NOT ARBITRARY OR ENTIRELY MANUFACTURED

Second, the entire construction could be arbitrary, which it clearly is not, if the focus of identity was simply fortuitous or convenient for those who might gain advantage from it. One could have ethnic groups of Toyota or Volkswagen owners or joggers and tennis players. What makes ethnic mobilisation possible (but not inevitable) is the presence of the variable but fairly common tendency to derive psychic satisfaction from a sense of group-belonging and ego-amplification, coupled with the fact that:

- THE AFFECTIVE AFFINITY OF ETHNICITY WITH KINSHIP GIVES IT ITS PREVALENCE AND MOBILISING POWER

The sense of identification with groups of actual or putative origin has a greater capacity to provide the psychic rewards for various reasons. Bentley makes a convincing case for the fact that because ethnic identification has an emotive affinity to the perceptions which bind actual families or clans together, descent symbolism enjoys prevalence over alternative symbols of identity (Bentley, 1987, following Epstein, 1978). However, one has to allow for the fact that religious identification can and often does offer equally powerful rewards (see chapter 2) and has the capacity to dislodge descent symbolism (see also persuasive arguments by Theodor Hanf (1994)). Where descent symbolism and a specific denominational identity are intertwined, as in the case of Afrikaners until recently, the power of the identification may be compounded.

- ETHNIC IDENTITY VARIES WITH HISTORICAL PAIN AND PAST MOBILISATION

The prior propensities to identify with descent groups are not, to borrow phrases from chapter 2, definitive, inevitable, ineluctable or ineffable, but they are commonly available and their effects can be activated by mobilisation. Their availability and the ease with which they will be activated will depend on the past experience of shared social stress, pain, humiliation, privation, relative deprivation, status threat or threats to self-image in the experience of the group. Trevor-Roper's depiction, referred to earlier, of nationalism as wounded identity is apposite. The range of "*amplifiers*" given above is deliberately broad. It may be made more difficult for ethnic mobilisation to occur or to persist in a group which was for the most part satisfied, wealthy, confident and whose political position was such as to make it immune to challenges within the immediate social environment. The recent examples in South Africa and in the USA of a shared consciousness among blacks of racial victimisation, which structures their contemporary attitudes within a framework of "*victimology*", to coin a clumsy phrase, is a convenient example.

- ORIGINAL ETHNIC IDENTITY IS ELABORATED AND SHAPED BY THE COMMONALITIES OF ONGOING EXPERIENCE

Moving the identity beyond a relatively inert potential, the structuring factor of commonalities of current experience is the crystallisation -- the "*deep structure*" (Bentley) of the "*habitus*". The "*habitus*" includes the effects of interaction with others by the members of the group in question. This "*habitus*" can maintain internal coherence or it can become diffuse or fragmented by a differentiation of interpretations. This crystallisation is not yet the group "*ideology*" but it is the basis on which an ideology offered to the group by the intelligentsia becomes meaningful. The "*habitus*" as it emerges in the shared understanding, must obviously be linked plausibly but not perfectly to the historical identity and the sense of shared past group experience.

- THE ETHNIC EXPERIENCE HAS TO BE INTERPRETED WITHIN THE ETHNIC GROUP

As suggested immediately above, this habitus must be internally reinforced and consolidated through socialisation and the formulation for the group of a popular ideology in the form of a mirror of its condition. This corresponds to Juteau's internal boundary formation. If the co-ordination and interpretation functions of the ethnic leaders and intelligentsia is weak and contradictory, and the socialisation functions are equally dissipated, then the condition of internal mobilisation of the group will be vulnerable to alternative forms of engagement with the wider society. In particular, for example, more universal appeals and the logic of individualistic engagement of the economy in the liberal mode will offer persuasive alternative orientations. Horowitz (1985:24) refers to the fact of relative group worth in unranked ethnic systems always being subject to great uncertainty, and makes reference later to the alternative moralities which impact upon the ethnic value system. The internal ethnic group "*boundary*" is indeed vulnerable to the forces which have been described in sociological shorthand as the forces of "*modernisation*".

Hence, for any instance of ethnic mobilisation, the servicing role of ethnic leadership and ethnic institutions of socialisation are paramount. One should note that where the themes in the internal boundary in contemporary society include a racist consciousness or any other consciousness which offends shared international norms, the ethnic mobilisation will be under particularly sharp attack. It is in such situations that the ethnic leaders and the ethnic intelligentsia must reconcile their ethnic goals with powerful external norms.

It was precisely this failure that gave Afrikaner ethnicity its greatest single source of vulnerability, and rightfully so because the ethnic leaders either defected, or failed to confront the racist Apartheid administration and bureaucracy in time. Having rigidly institutionalised the racist system in "*separate development*" the state administration, through typical fear of precedent, was itself unable to adjust the system it had set in motion.

- THE STATE IS POWERFUL IN CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS FOR THE ACTIVATION OF ETHNICITY

The observation above raises the need for an additional point, this being that the state, whether colonial or otherwise, can impose conditions which shape the "*habitus*" quite formidably and can even create the opportunity for new definitions of descent (see Laitin, 1982 on the influence of colonial and post-colonial government on Yoruba ethnicity). By their very definition state laws and regulations as they intersect with ethnic aspirations will have a definitive effect. The main point about the influence of governments on the internal boundary creation is that they are less flexible than informal ethnic processes and the ethnic definitions can be artificially strengthened in the short term but become ossified in the process.

- ETHNIC BOUNDARIES ARE SHAPED IN INTERACTION WITH THE INTERNAL COMMONALITIES OF EXPERIENCE, INSTRUMENTALITIES, AND RESPONSES TO THE GROUP BY OUTSIDERS

The concepts of *habitus* or internal boundary formation would be meaningless if the entire group lives on an island. The potential would be there but ethnic mobilisation only becomes conceptually possible in interaction with other groups or nations. The external boundary formation, in Juteau's terms, in alignment with Barth (1969), is the vehicle or the mechanism by which competitive goals are achieved and in terms of which transactions with other groups and with the outside political and social environment occur. But most importantly, it is, to paraphrase Barth's famous expression (1969:14-15), the shape and texture and structure of the ethnic "*vessel*" which according to Barth, gives the ethnic group its content and character.

But in line with Juteau and the proposition above, the boundary is not merely some alienated construction which imposes downwards. If external forces are powerful in limiting and confining an ethnic minority in social and economic space this downward imposition would be relatively definitive, but not completely so. Similarly, if class forces or power interests exercise influences to structure a boundary, close it off or open it up for instrumental reasons, the forces would impose themselves downwards, but not

with absolute effect. In contrast to the popular conceptions of the boundary hypotheses, this author's argument and probably that of Juteau is that the vessel and the contents-- the external and internal boundary norms and criteria -- interact to produce the outcome. Two minorities in comparable situations of powerless and social exclusion will not necessary respond in the same way or develop the same types of boundaries.

The external boundaries of the group, then, are those forces of inclusion or exclusion which create opportunities or limitations for the ethnic group, as they are responded to by the ethnic membership itself, and the responses will not be uniform. But the responses can be creative to the extent that the social institutions, leaders, mobilisers and role models in the ethnic group understand the process and, once again, with respect to the reasons why an ethnic consciousness exists in the first place, attempt to reconcile the forces, constraints and opportunities.

This final suggestion is simultaneously a suggestion that "*sociology*" is not only the interplay of abstractions in the form of values and structure: it is also process and agency. Horowitz (1975:135) refers to the "*alacrity with which groups are able to adjust their identity downwards as well as upwards ...*". Sandra Wallmann (1986:245) from within the "*boundary*" tradition, observes after an empirical study of ethnic situations in London, that the resilience of ethnic organisation varies with the flexibility of its boundaries, the openness and heterogeneity of its leadership structure which allows for generative organisational forms, and with the levels of its economic and identity resources. Esman (1990), referred to earlier, also emphasises the importance of the co-ordinating and interpretive functions of ethnic elites.

These propositions, ranging from the original core of potential for ethnic mobilisation to its instrumental functions of positioning a group relative to others or dealing with the way in which the alternative groups impose boundaries on the group, would seem to be reasonably capable of answering all the questions thrown at ethnicity. As postulated in chapter 1, no basis was discovered in this analysis for declaring that essential, instrumental and constructivist explanations of ethnicity are mutually incompatible and cannot be reconciled.

They are incompatible only if either the essentiality of identity or the structures of instrumentality are claimed to be autonomous, or to have greater autonomy than the alternative dynamic. These claims, endlessly pursued in the literature, have done much to retard the development of insights potentially useful not only in the development of disciplines but in the search for the reconciliation of ethnic conflict.

## **12.5 FINAL COMMENTS ON THE CURRENT COLLAPSE OF AFRIKANER ETHNIC MOBILISATION**

Finally, then, how and why has the formerly formidable Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation decomposed? There may be wider lessons in the answers to these questions.

Most of the attempts at answering these questions have been stated or implied in the earlier discussions. Concluding observations may be useful, however.

### **THE DILEMMAS OF UNRANKED ETHNIC MOBILISATION**

A large part of the limpness of Afrikaner ethnicity in mobilised form derives from its unranked status. For a negatively-ranked ethnic formation -- an exploited or marginalised minority -- the mode of solidarity in opposition, protest or dissent may be dangerous, but it does provide the glue to which Horowitz referred. It also focuses the minds of the coordinating elites. There is also a great deal to be gained if opposition succeeds. Furthermore, the legitimacy of the surrounding political and social system can be discredited, which means that the elites and intellectuals are protected from distracting values and ideologies, or else they can commandeer such values to back their own claims.

Afrikaners today are not oppressed or exploited. They have serious problems which will be noted later, but they are still widespread in officialdom. the Afrikaans elite residential areas are among the richest in the country, and although unemployment is increasing, it is below

the average levels of unemployment in the European Union. Their often legitimate grievances over high levels of crime and corruption and standards of administration are fully shared with English-speakers, coloured people. Indians and increasingly with middle class blacks. In point of fact, the levels of crime are highest in English-speaking white residential areas. A report in the *Saturday Star* (13/11/1999), based on police statistics on local areas in Gauteng for 1998, shows that after central business and inner city districts, the predominantly English-speaking residential suburbs of Sandton, Randburg, and Brooklyn have higher rates of serious crime than mainly black areas like Soweto or the Afrikaans-speaking areas of northern Pretoria.

Hence there is little cause for ethnic solidarity in their socio-economic "*habitus*" conditions; rather a middle class, minority-based protest solidarity which is precisely the political framework which the English-language Democratic Party offers. In a speech to the Freedom Front in July 1997, the experienced observer of Afrikaner affairs, Isak de Villiers, the then editor of the largest Afrikaans newspaper *Rapport*, explained the relative lack of success of that ethnic party very simply:

*"Too little has changed for Afrikaners. The constellation of trends looks bad, the major structures are shifting, things will change, but at present life has a reassuring normality."*

I will come to de Villiers' prediction presently.

## THE CHANGED RATIONALE FOR MOBILISATION

As discussed in chapter 5, the major impact of the change in the political dispensation for Afrikaners has been the rapid relative downgrading of the status of the Afrikaans language. From personal experience, a mere five years after transition, Afrikaner officials in Pretoria are losing their technical and professional vocabularies in Afrikaans. Poor coloured people can speak Afrikaans in public offices but white middle-class Afrikaners are simply assumed to feel obligated to speak the language of the new elite, English. As the empirical studies have shown, Afrikaners are anything but happy about this. Why then are they not mobilising?



There are initiatives such as the Afrikaans "*Oorlegplatform*" (Consultative Forum) which is just beginning the new intellectual debate, and various cultural bodies constantly make polite noises of concern. Popular grass-roots involvement is restricted to tight and localised networks, like the listeners of the "*rebel*" Radio Pretoria (which actually has very little political content).

One of the reasons for this limpness has been implied in much of the preceding discussion. Although the Afrikaans language is objectively a core concern of the ethnic group, it ceased to be an issue of mobilisation before most of today's Afrikaners were born. The language was bureaucratised into neutrality as a mobilising concern. The key sensitivities of ethnic response became centred around race, political power and economic opportunity and or privilege. The issue of Afrikaans is not aligned with these mobilising sensitivities, and more importantly, it requires an alternative framework of articulation and rationalisation.

The Afrikaans language is a non-racial marker. It is shared between a white middle class and the poorer sections of the coloured community and very small black communities. It is not the racial cleavage which is paramount, however. It is that the key priorities of the wider ethnic circle are not where Afrikaans is at. Afrikaans is what one may term a socio-cultural attribute which is "*nice to have*"; it is not a "*need to have*". As a "*nice to have*" it is passionately enjoyed and respected, but its public decline is not "*life threatening*" within Carter Bentley's conception of the ethnic "*habitus*" (see earlier).

For the Afrikaners of the "*inner*" or core consciousness, Afrikaans is a "*need to have*", but they are divided along other lines. Half or more of the core-consciousness Afrikaners are deeply conservative and have an attenuated intellectual leadership. Some are deeply conformist in religious orientation and tend to eschew activism of all kinds. Others are progressive humanists and "*greenish*" cultural conservationists for whom Afrikaans is a non-racial issue remote from any concern with its bureaucratic downgrading. There is no single Bentley-type "*habitus*" for these disparate social categories -- they live in different South Africas.

## THE MYTH OF ORIGIN AND KINSHIP HAS BEEN COMPROMISED

In ethnicity myths matter, and to the extent that the Afrikaner myth of kinship was a euro-centric conception of origin in a continent of high cultures of great antiquity, that myth is no longer of any utility as an identity-anchor in strategic public debate. It is deeply politically incorrect, and as such embarrasses any Afrikaner who follows the Afrikaans press, let alone public television. Today, most of the people who visit the Voortrekker Monument are foreign tourists or curious blacks.

If Afrikaners were poor and exploited these fashionable considerations would not matter. Traditional Zulus honour the warrior-king and sub-continental tyrant, Shaka, with great enthusiasm, but Afrikaner historical rituals have been sanitised. At a 1998 *Day of the Covenant* ceremony, not long ago the premier ritual occasion for the nationalist faithful, the speaker, Professor Fika van Rensburg concluded: "*The time ... of closing off to protect and to nurture, of exclusive prescriptions and of negative, rejecting and self-congratulatory Afrikanerdom has passed*" (Rapport, 27/12/98). Afrikaners changed the name of Verwoerdburg to the name of a cricket-ground, and some are busy mobilising support for a name change for Pretoria, the capital of Paul Kruger's Republic, to Mandela City. Most Afrikaners and English-speaking whites, as post-industrial middle-classes, more than any of their compatriots, are captives of global New-Class ideology.

## INSTRUMENTAL LIABILITIES

Afrikaners have over one-third of the total spending power in South Africa, and with coloured Afrikaans-speakers, the language-based spending power could be close to 40 per cent. But advertising in Afrikaans is declining sharply (MarkData database). Most Afrikaans companies are recasting their corporate images so as to neutralise impressions of

the ethnic connection. Employment Equity legislation, while defensible in the larger context, means that an Afrikaans or any white male identity is no advantage and is often a liability on the job-market.

There is still an active nation-wide Afrikaans Chamber of Commerce movement and Afrikaans businesses enjoy some of the advantages of networks in business linkages and market penetration, but these are typically localised in scope. There are consistent pressures on the *Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut* (The Afrikaans Commercial Institute) to merge into a wider non-racial body. There are very few instrumental reinforcements of the ethnic boundary, and more instrumental penalties associated with it.

#### THE WEAKNESS OF THE MANAGING AND CONCILIATING FUNCTION

Esman (1990:55) describes this function:

*"Much of the energy of ethnic group leaders must often be committed to managing and conciliating these internal tensions and conflicts in order to maintain control ... and to battling opponents within the ethnic community."*

This was described earlier, following Juteau, as part of the internal boundary process. In the Afrikaans ethnic formation at present this function is not even weak -- as a centrally located process it is non-existent.

The Afrikaner Broederbond, which was the co-ordinating core (see earlier assessments) maintained secrecy long after it was necessary, and hence lost accountability within the ethnic constituency. It relinquished its early independence of political parties and coalesced with the National Party, which meant that when the National Party split or lost votes, the Broederbond lost more and more of its overview capacity. It played, with other groupings, a fairly valuable undercover role in facilitating the readiness to negotiate before the transition to open government, but when the negotiations actually occurred it relinquished its responsibilities to the National Party cabinet.

The Broederbond still exists, now as the Afrikanerbond, and is no longer clandestine, but from its attenuated position it has been unable regain any central co-ordinating role in respect of the major ethnic issue -- the status of the Afrikaans language. Its current human resource capacity is questionable.

## DECOMPOSITION ALMOST COMPLETE

The collapse of the Afrikaner ethnic enterprise, therefore, has occurred neatly in terms of all the ethnic rules reviewed in previous sections; from the founding myths and anchors of identity through to co-ordinating capacities and both internal and external boundary regulations. The case study offers rather complete negative confirmation of the way ethnicity works.

All that is left are the nominal cultural markers, a sense of status loss which is salient at a secondary level of priorities and an apparently intensifying but relatively restricted core of identity -- the inner layer of consciousness uncovered by the empirical findings.

## 12.6 THE FUTURE: REMISSION OR REBIRTH?

Prediction is hazardous and particularly so in respect of a fluid phenomenon like ethnicity. All one can do is to employ techniques of informed speculation in an attempt to comprehend the likely variability of the phenomenon in the future. The discussion below will claim no more than to explore, tentatively at best, the contrasting but realistic possibilities which the future might hold in the form of a scenario analysis. The analysis will draw liberally but broadly on the propositions on ethnic mobilisation and conflict in chapter 3, and in the other theoretical chapters.

David Laitin remarks that "*Observers of nationalism are indeed both awed by its power and dumfounded by its weakness*" (1997: 280). Yet within nationalism the seed of identity

has impressed observers with its persistence and tenacity, language-based identity often at the forefront. In a review of modern Europe, Laitin notes that

*"People want to keep their mother tongues alive even if those languages are left behind in the worlds of technology and interdependence" (p280).*

The empirical review in this dissertation has demonstrated that while the political mobilisation of Afrikaners has collapsed, and their boundaries with other minority groups are porous, a core of commitment within the group, with language as its critical marker, and a sense of threat and loss of status appears to be established and, if anything, gradually intensifying. Will this trend continue and build up to a situation in which new ethnic claims challenge the state?

Research in some very broadly similar situations does not provide categorical guidance. Fenwick, after studying the historical emergence of French Quebecois regional communalism in Canada, contrary to expectations concluded that

*"modernisation, industrialisation and increasing economic integration promote the likelihood that nationalist movements will develop among minority communal groups" (1981:215).*

He also demonstrated that despite the structural integration of the over-arching economy, the social segmentation between French and English-speakers had not diminished, due in some measure to the cultural division of labour. On the other hand, a similar study of Flemish identity in Belgium suggests far more ambiguous processes (Kerremans, 1996). Kerremans adduces evidence to suggest that the Flemish rank-and-file are far from being overwhelmingly in favour of greater formal and constitutional Flemish autonomy or separation in Belgium, although most of the elites and political leaders certainly are.

Neither the situation of the French in Canada or of the Flemish in Belgium is strictly comparable to that of Afrikaners in South Africa today. The major difference is that neither French language in Quebec or Flemish in Belgium are any longer under any significant threat as official regional languages and as languages of formal cultural communication. One might expect that the Afrikaners, by comparison will become more activated over

language rights than the cases above as time goes by, particularly if a popular cultural leadership emerges to drive the action.

On the balance of probabilities, it would seem as if the core language-based ethnic commitment among Afrikaners is likely to at least maintain itself at the levels described in earlier sections or slowly intensify, all else being equal. A further assumption that one can make, all else being equal, is that the broader ethnic amplifier of non-ethnic grievances which was identified earlier will continue to create greater alienation among Afrikaners than among other minorities.

But all else is seldom equal and we know from the foregoing analysis that the influence of state policy and institutions, of wider conditions in the society and of the interaction with other groups will have decisive effects on the pursuit of ethnic goals. On the basis of the review of literature in chapter 3 and the conclusions in chapter 4, one might sum up the hypothetical propensity for remobilisation and activism among Afrikaners as follows:

Factors predisposing to ethnic action include:

1. the fact that they have a history of mobilisation;
2. the severe losses of status and loss of autonomy which have occurred in the recent past;
3. the clear evidence from the empirical studies that they consider the present dispensation to be unfair and less than they consider themselves to be entitled to (relative deprivation);
4. the blocks to legal redress due to the fact that the constitution and legislation rules out any challenge to affirmative action or claims to a restoration of language rights;
5. the fact that they are "*squeezed*" in the sense that there is no escape from their perceived predicament. They cannot escape their racial identity, which means that they would not benefit by submerging their Afrikaner ethnic identity. The perception is that the only way of evading their situation is to

fall in line with government expectations and align themselves with the majority in a position of second-class status. It is perceived by many to be a situation in which they are being forced to sacrifice commitment to their own ethnic group;

6. the indication from the literature that ethnic dissent is greatest in situations of intermediate "*repression*" (neither stark authoritarian repression nor the scope of action possible in a liberal democracy) is perhaps another factor which will predispose to some form of action.

Factors which hypothetically militate against the prospects for ethnic action include the following:

1. the fact that although grievances are high, the action-orientation is lower than it is among some other groups, hence the intensity of grievances may not outweigh perceived penalties and constraints;
2. the fact that perceived discrimination is not seen to be directed against Afrikaners specifically but against whites or minorities in general;
3. the fact that the wider group, as opposed to the core group, tends to have a dual identity which would indicate that a specifically ethnic cause would be limited in scope;
4. the fact that Afrikaner elites are divided and that the coherence of organisation has become weakened;
5. as a relatively prosperous group there is the large disincentive of a lot to lose;
6. the Afrikaners would have few allies if they were to confront the state. Furthermore, state appears to be very determined to pursue a nation-building approach and most of the media, including the Afrikaans press tends to support this approach, as do the many Afrikaners who still work for the state. The moral imperatives of the central state may therefore be a very large constraint;
7. there is also the possibility that more time might have to elapse: the literature reviewed suggested that overt ethnicity can become latent or submerge for a

period while a group and its leaders remobilise and develop a strategic view. (See the discussion of the work of Gurr, de Nevers, Williams and others in chapter 3.)

It does seem then that the prospects for some form of remobilisation among Afrikaners are very much in balance, and that remobilisation, under present circumstances will not be rapid. To assess these prospects in greater detail would require extremely detailed investigation of policy and likely future developments in the wider society., well beyond the scope of this study. All that can be attempted is to capture major possibilities in the form of broad alternative trends in Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation within the scenario analysis below.

One base of analysis in the scenarios is the internal propensity to remobilise among Afrikaners, discussed above. Another base of analysis is the current approach by government to minority interests and ethnic claims. Given the ANC government's formal and repeated commitments to non-racism, albeit qualified by relatively restrained affirmative action, transformation and redistribution policies, one can rule out any naked repressive action against Afrikaner cultural interests, or more punitive policies than the current stance (see Adam, 1995). Following Giliomee (1998) and themes debated in Giliomee and Simkins (1999), with own observations added, I would describe one of the orientations of the current ANC government as one of "*responsive hegemony*" or perhaps even "*gentle Jacobinism*".

The term hegemony, in the tradition of Gramsci, is frequently used by the ANC in its own communications, as the following recent example illustrates:

*"Our first responsibility in developing an approach to deployment in the present phase is to establish what the principal tasks of the revolution are ... Winning hegemony ... Our programme of prioritising key centres of power for deployment should therefore continue ... (and) should go hand in hand with the movement having a programme of engaging with the institutions we seek to transform - hence the importance ... of the continual mass-presence of the ANC ... (in) legislatures at all levels, the economy, education science and technology, sports, recreation and culture, mass popular organisations and mass communication."* (ANC, Cadre Policy and Deployment



Strategy, 20, July, 1999)

This illustration should make it clear that as one of the bases of its policy approach, the current government is clearly "*centralist*" in its philosophy and as such not exactly wedded to the principles of "*pluralist*" or liberal democracy. The composition of the ANC is multiplex, and another relevant view in the ANC is what one might describe as "*civic nationalism*". Greenfield (1992) uses this term in distinction to that of ethnic nationalism; it implies an individually-based conception of a national community based on citizenship. But the concept of civic nationalism in the case of the ANC is, not surprisingly, coloured by the notion that the character of the nation will reflect the fact that it has an African majority and an African location.

In terms of both the centralist-hegemonic and the civic-majoritarian conceptions of the national community, the notion of even a degree of autonomy for independent and particularistic interests is problematic for the party. It is to its credit, therefore, that in practice it has taken the trouble to meet with and listen to the problems of ethnic minorities, including meetings with the Afrikaner right-wing Freedom Front. This has been described earlier as a "*pacification*" strategy, and while it may not have been intended as such, that has been its effect. The Leader of the Freedom Front, General Viljoen, has in fact aroused the ire of viewpoints within his own circle because of his meetings with the ANC. A common view among many Afrikaners is that it is a "*heuningkwas*" technique (a paintbrush dipped in honey) and that it is co-optive and disempowering (Rapport, 15/2/1998).

The view of government leadership on the place and role of ethnic minorities like Afrikaners was lucidly, if diplomatically expressed by President Mbeki in an address to a recent gathering of the Afrikanerbond:

*"We should say that a real Afrikaner is a good Afrikaner if he is concerned about the interests of all the people in the country ... The challenge facing South Africans is to ensure that their different cultures, languages and religions cease to make them islands unto themselves".*

This is inviting rhetoric, but, not surprisingly, the Chairman of the Afrikanerbond replied that

*"the ability of Afrikaners to contribute to development would be influenced by the degree to which they could continue to be themselves ... we cannot contribute if we are marginalised, if we are excluded from public life."* (Citizen, 28/7/1999)

Hence the government and the ANC are firm on the principle of the unity and integration of all minorities by way of nation-building, and accept and even respect cultural variety but only as a quality of the integration. While firm in its principle that minorities have a primary obligation to commit themselves to the nation, the alacrity with which the government has at least listened to Afrikaners suggests a degree of flexibility and willingness to entertain conciliation within the model. Mbeki announced recently that he would establish a division in his office for the protection of minority rights.

As bases for the further analysis, both the consciousnesses among Afrikaners and the approach of the government to minority issues will vary with the scenarios which will be developed below. In developing the scenarios I have drawn heavily on my own regular monitor of the political environment of the economy for the South African Council of Business (SACOB/Schlemmer, 1996-1999) and a very comprehensive recent policy analysis by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (Bernstein et al. 1999). It should be noted that while the real world is always more than a little untidy, the approach of scenario construction requires that outcomes be distinctive or even polarised in order to best illustrate the underlying dynamics (see Peter Schwartz, 1991). Among many possible outcomes, the more probable scenarios which crystallise are the following:

1. CONSOLIDATION: present policies with regard to cultural and racial minorities continue, average levels of economic growth improve on their present mediocre levels and hence ensure reasonable per-capita income growth, and on the strength of increased fiscal resources, the coherence and effectiveness of state administration and security control also improves gradually. The demand for skills allows racial equity policies and affirmative action for blacks to be pursued without undue constraints on

opportunities for minorities. The grievances of minorities tend to subside gradually, and core Afrikaans concerns are supported less and less by wider minority grievances and disaffection. The government is under decreasing pressure to address minority issues and Afrikaans ethnic and language interests, while not discredited, are sidelined.

2. **CONCESSIONS AND CONCILATION:** economic recovery is not sustained and socio-economic grievances among minorities persists. The state experiences ongoing capacity problems and both the efficiency of state administration and the effectiveness of the security system is compromised. Because these capacity problems deepen grievances and lower investor confidence, the economy deteriorates further and all the problems are drawn into a self-reinforcing downward spiral. Recognising that there is a risk of serious disaffection among minorities, the government, within its current policy framework in respect of language, cultural and group rights, initially makes cosmetic and ameliorative gestures to minorities and to Afrikaners, but has to give greater attention to the mounting problems besetting the black majority. While it resists populist pressures, it has to increase its clientelism and patronage to the emerging black middle class to prevent divisions in the ANC support base.
  
3. **DEFENSIVE REACTION:** the economic, governance and security scenarios are negative as in 2 above, and as above the deterioration tends to be self-reinforcing. Instead of attempting any conciliation of minority grievances, the government, fearful of the precedents which might be created and under pressure from radical viewpoints within its alliance with the South African Communist Party and the labour movement, reacts defensively and attempts to discredit or intimidate minority protests. At the same time it has to deal with dissent of a non-ethnic kind on a wider basis as well. The overall coherence of the ANC begins to deteriorate and tendencies towards authoritarianism emerge.

If scenario 1 (CONSOLIDATION) or something like it materialises, given leadership divisions and the disparate strategic consciousness among Afrikaners, the sheer variety of

reactions to the political and economic environment will ensure broad continuity with the present. The credibility of the stance supporting a civic nationalism and an individual rights-based political culture will solidify. The scope of intense core commitment among Afrikaners will remain small and may even shrink, although the intensity of the commitment at the core might deepen very gradually over time. Afrikaners at large are likely to begin to resemble a minority linguistic category rather than an organised ethnic group. The strength and spread of the language as a private medium will shrink for a protracted period awaiting a rebirth at some much later stage if and when the political culture in the country become more accommodating of diversity and pluralism. (In other words Afrikaans may follow the route of Friesian or Welsh identity for a long while.)

No major dissent could be expected even from the core group of Afrikaners because the disincentive of improving state security capacity and the fact that so many of the members will have so much to lose will ensure compliance.

If scenario 2 (CONCESSION AND CONCILATION) were to emerge, a process of re-mobilisation of Afrikaners could commence, with far-reaching possibilities. Restricted economic opportunity and affirmative action for blacks will make more leadership talent available to the group. The protest consciousness within the core and the wider group will re-socialise people in the course of everyday interaction (see "*habitus*" in the previous sections) and the scope of core commitments will broaden. If and when a more overt ethnic protest consciousness emerges, it will be likely to enjoy moral support from the wider non-core Afrikaner group, from English-speaking whites and from black and coloured minority language groups as well.

The conciliation attempts of government will probably be to offer a more substantive "*multiculturalism*", perhaps resembling the Australian model or in the form of special cultural councils, a charter of language rights and guarantees of the language-integrity of Afrikaans schools and universities. Such gestures will perhaps pacify many Afrikaners but will also increase the confidence and sense of opportunity among the more ethnically-committed core Afrikaners, as well as that among other minorities. For this reason and

because of mounting socio-economic grievances, the concessions will not satisfy the rising expectations and the sense of being relatively deprived.

The main stimulus, however, will be the sense of emerging possibilities for self-determination, which will encourage more trenchant demands. Multi-cultural policy will tend to lurch from precedent to precedent, and it could very well become elaborated to include elements of consociation in the form of devolution, like a small self-governing Volkstaat, or areas of limited local self-determination either on a geographic basis or more probably resembling the formal spheres of autonomy for minorities in the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, -- the policies of the Austro-Marxists like Karl Renner (see Hanf, 1994; Raanan et al, 1991) While there will be a risk that the progression to more substantive forms of multiculturalism will lead to the break-up of the state, there would be an equal chance that the country could stabilise and rebuild as a territorial and non-territorial federation.

One proviso would apply, however -- the devolution could not be on racial lines, because that would alienate so many interests within the ANC that generalised instability or counter-mobilisation could well result. Hence any form of devolution would have to involve coalitions of minorities in local areas or in regions -- an interest in such coalitions has already begun to emerge in the Afrikaner right-wing movement.

The third scenario (DEFENSIVE REACTION) is the least predictable and the most disturbing. If in a deteriorating socio-economic situation, the government toughens up and rejects protests, proposals and appeals, it could lead to deterioration in the quality of the democracy to the point that special security measures are introduced. This, however, will occur at a point when the security capacity is also compromised and demoralised. The stage could be set for a widening potential for general instability.

The current mobilisation and consciousness among Afrikaners is not such that they are likely to take the initiative; it is far more likely to emerge in marginal areas of the country among black language and tribally-based ethnic categories like the former Transkei or

traditional parts of KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Province, where militant mobilised factions already commit violence from time-to-time. Under the conditions described, events such as these, with a burgeoning of protest consciousness among right-wing core Afrikaans groupings, a mobilised form of Afrikaner dissent could follow. There are well-armed hard men who are very quiet at the moment but they could come to the fore very readily (the Mail and Guardian gives an interesting example: 25/9/1998). Current mobilisation against affirmative action by the right-wing Afrikaans-based Mineworkers Union is also suggestive, and it serves to underline the points made by Johnston (1991) about the utility of trade-union organisation within ethnic movements.

Such developments could all lead to a situation of national fragmentation which is currently typical in large parts of the rest of the Southern African sub-region, but it could lead to earlier negotiations and trade-offs, with an outcome like that suggested for scenario 2. If the government tries to enforce central control and persists in attempts to discredit minority-based movements, the initial response among Afrikaners will be typical of that described by Gurr as “*conspiracy*” (1970:341-343 *passim*).

Gurr distinguishes between three forms of instability: generalised and formless “*turmoil*”, internal war, and conspiracy. The latter occurs when dissidents are a narrowly-based formation, but with high levels of discontent among its elites and with effective resources and leadership, amidst a wider constituency which is non-mobilised and divided.

The state has capacity and loyalty problems in imposing coercive controls. As the conspirators achieve successes, elements in the wider constituency start to give strategic or moral support and an ethnic movement emerges or re-emerges.

Hence the outcome could be that of devolution along the lines of scenario 2, but the extent of eventual concessions by the state could be more far-reaching, in constitutional terms. Once again, however, the Afrikaner core movement will need cross-racial “*bodyguards*” to fend off black mass counter-reaction, and the devolution is likely to be to the benefit of multi-race coalitions or regional arrangements.

Isak de Villiers, the former editor of the Afrikaans newspaper Rapport who was quoted earlier on the reasons for the current decomposition of Afrikaner nationalism, also predicted very firmly that circumstances would arise that would eventually lead to a Volkstaat. Perhaps he had scenarios 2 or 3 in mind. Economic growth with its implication of increased state capacity and opportunities for the economic co-optation of minorities would be the most secure guarantee that scenario 1 will materialise. Even the best of macro-economic management cannot ensure a dynamic economy, however, because of chronically low savings rates in the South African economy and the ever-present danger of emerging market contagion in a globalised world.

There might be a view that one outcome has been overlooked in the assessment of the future. This outcome would be a variant on the picture of consolidation and integration which was presented under scenario 1. The view might be that an alternative to both the latency or remission of Afrikaner ethnicity under a powerfully integrating state project, and the alternative of ethnic contestation, exists in the form of democratic multiculturalism, without any devolution of power, within a benign consensus which would both preserve the coherence of the civic nationalism and the viability of ethnic cultures and languages.

The Economist (23/9/1995:21-25) is eloquent on this possibility:

*"The trick in a successful (multi-ethnic) society is for minority citizens to feel that they are more than one thing at once: to be able to feel American and black, Scottish and British, an Orthodox Christian and a Bosnian, a Muslim and an Indian. This is hard and it is easier for anyone seeking a power-base to make it harder still ... But people will resist such appeals if it seems worthwhile to them. There are ideas that people value as they value blood and earth."*

This possibility is the heartfelt wish of many Afrikaner intellectuals who try to balance a pride in culture with an endorsement of the civic nationalism of the ANC. It is the public stance of most foreign diplomats in the country and it is the spirit that moves the cultural desk of the ANC, provided that methods are in place to ensure that the whole project is centrally co-ordinated. It has in a sense also been the thrust of some very well-considered

recommendations for South Africa. The student of South Africa, Theo Hanf has suggested some form of “*ideological syncretism*”-- voluntary affiliation to non-racial cultural groupings coexisting with a consensus on national unity and democratic majoritarianism (Hanf, 1989:112).

No doubt this kind of resolution has been secured in many places for long periods of time – the United Kingdom would be an example in respect of the Welsh and the Scots until fairly recently, and in many ways it is the basis for the accommodation of ethnicity in the USA. The tough question, however, is whether or not it can survive in a system of ranked ethnicity, and in systems in which demographic imbalances correlate with voting trends and executive power to exclude minorities from effective political participation on a long-term basis? Is it not a system which is only likely to work or survive in pluralist democracies where the ethnic members have little sense of relative deprivation as groups and a rough equilibrium of power ensures that nobody feels politically excluded?

Multiculturalism in majority-controlled unitary states has a very poor track record in Africa, and Crawford Young argues that it has been the basis for the emergence of open or disguised second-class citizenship (Young, 1997:4-14) But this type of accusation has been levelled even in developed societies. Human rights-based individualism and liberal democracy can be an arrangement which is most advantageous for privileged majority-based elites, and one in which the lack of communal rights leaves ethnic minorities in a situation of legitimated powerlessness. Charles Taylor is well-known for his depiction of this kind of situation as a case of “*democratic exclusion*”(1998:144-156). A universal-human rights tradition promoted by the progressive upper-middle classes of an economically or politically-dominant majority can serve to obscure and protect their own implicit ethnicity, quite as successfully as implicit ethnicity can be obscured in situations of authoritarian majority dominance. The British author Geoff Dench, partly on the basis of an examination of the situation of the Maltese and other minorities in the UK, has made a compelling analysis of the ironic contradictions and protective mechanisms within a progressive nation dedicated to individual liberty and human rights (Dench, 1986). Even an



author who works in the Parliamentary office of the ANC, after a study of a Zulu ethnic festival, has concluded that:

*"As South Africa attempts to consolidate its democracy ... it will have to try to reinvent pluralism, eschewing the indifference to difference which is the norm of established liberal democracies."* ( Mathieson and Attwell, 1998:122)

Yet, one dare not rush to discredit civic consciousness and the universal goals of liberal democracy. Ralf Dahrendorf, in outlining a general view on democracy, correctly observes that *"The constitution of liberty works, then, to the extent to which a society is dominated by public virtues."* (Dahrendorf, 1967:30) He contrasts the public or civic consciousness of Britain with the deeply romantic and ultimately lethal ethnic consciousness of pre-war Germany. This truth, and the truths of community, identity and familiarity, are all enriching, and all can be exploited. One can only hope that somewhere between South Africa's futures, a resolution may be found.



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